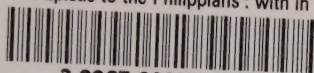


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WESTMINSTER COMMENTARIES

EDITED BY WALTER LOCK D.D.

IRELAND PROFESSOR OF THE EXEGESIS  
OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

THE EPISTLE  
TO  
THE PHILIPPIANS



THE EPISTLE  
TO  
THE PHILIPPIANS

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

MAURICE JONES, D.D.

RECTOR OF ROTHERFIELD PEPPARD

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## PREFATORY NOTE BY THE GENERAL EDITOR

**T**HE primary object of these Commentaries is to be exegetical, to interpret the meaning of each book of the Bible in the light of modern knowledge to English readers. The Editors will not deal, except subordinately, with questions of textual criticism or philology; but taking the English text in the Revised Version as their basis, they will aim at combining a hearty acceptance of critical principles with loyalty to the Catholic Faith.

The series will be less elementary than the Cambridge Bible for Schools, less critical than the International Critical Commentary, less didactic than the Expositor's Bible; and it is hoped that it may be of use both to theological students and to the clergy, as well as to the growing number of educated laymen and laywomen who wish to read the Bible intelligently and reverently.

Each commentary will therefore have

(i) An Introduction stating the bearing of modern criticism and research upon the historical character of the book, and drawing out the contribution which the book, as a whole, makes to the body of religious truth.

(ii) A careful paraphrase of the text with notes on the more difficult passages and, if need be, excursions on any points of special importance either for doctrine, or ecclesiastical organization, or spiritual life.

But the books of the Bible are so varied in character that considerable latitude is needed, as to the proportion which the various parts should hold to each other. The General Editor will therefore only endeavour to secure a general uniformity in scope and character: but the exact method adopted in each case and the final responsibility for the statements made will rest with the individual contributors.

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WALTER LOCK



## PREFACE

THIS Commentary is throughout the product of the War period and every line of it was written under the shadow of the deplorable calamity that has overcome this world of ours. It is possible that some traces of the conditions under which it was written may be discernible in the book itself, for the author found in the *Epistle to the Philippians* a never-failing source of comfort and encouragement in many a dark day and a beacon of hope in times of stress and storm whose light was ever shining. I can imagine no more effective mental or spiritual tonic and no more powerful incitement to patience, courage, and joy, however gloomy and depressing the outlook may be, than the study of this letter, with its vivid picture of the characteristic cheerfulness and unquenchable joy of the great Apostle, though a violent death might be looming in the near future and life, at best, had little to offer him but labour and sorrow. Its many inspiring, consoling, and uplifting passages, as e.g. ii. 17, 18, "Yea, and if I am offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all: and in the same manner do ye also joy, and rejoice with me", come ringing across the gulf of the ages with an appeal and pathos that time has not in the least impaired.

It is this particular aspect of the Epistle, as revealing St Paul's consistent patience amid grievous trials, his

amazing buoyancy of spirit in days of darkness and uncertainty, his unfailing trust in the love of God in Christ Jesus, and the serenity and joy which no present misfortune and no evil to come can dim, that I have attempted mainly to bring out in the present volume, and if the study of the Commentary serves to bring to a few readers the unceasing comfort which the writing of it brought to me I shall feel that I have received ample reward for my labour.

The somewhat disproportionate length of the Introduction may possibly require an explanation. This feature in the Commentary is largely due to the fact that advanced criticism within recent years has confined its attention mainly to two points in connection with our Epistle, viz. its integrity, and its place of origin; and as neither of these subjects had been adequately discussed in any previous Commentary on the Epistle it became necessary to deal with both at considerable length in the present work.

I desire to tender my most sincere gratitude to the General Editor of the series. Dr Lock's wise counsel and ripe judgment were generously placed at my disposal at every stage of composition, and whatever merits the Commentary may possess are very substantially due to his valuable help and co-operation.

M. J.

*Holy Cross Day, 1917.*

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## INTRODUCTION

### I. PHILIPPI.

THE name of Philippi will always arouse the interest and enlist the sympathy of every European Christian as being that of the city in which organised Christianity in the person of its greatest representative first secured a footing in his own continent. The pre-Christian history of the city is as important as it is interesting, seeing that it was closely connected with the birth of two world-wide Empires. Its name it owed to Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great who founded the Greek Empire of the East, extended the Greek power as far as India, and originated the movement which spread widely through Asia the matchless language and culture of Greece. Its greatest political privilege, that of being a Roman colony, it derived from the fact that it by chance became the scene of the decisive victories of the triumvirate, Octavian, Antony, and Lepidus, over the murderers of Julius Caesar, an event which had no small influence upon the subsequent fortunes of Octavian in that it formed the first step of the ladder which ultimately led to his elevation as the first Emperor of Rome under the title of Augustus. It was destined, however, to attain to still greater honour and to become associated with a still greater Name, "the Name which is above every name", and to mark an important stage in the onward march of an Empire of which the Empires of Alexander and Augustus were but pale shadows, an Empire whose crowning point was to be attained only when "all the kingdoms of this world became the kingdoms of the Lord".

#### *Philippi as a Greek City.*

The spot whereon Philippi stood was of importance from very early days owing to the fertility of its surroundings and the rich mineral deposits found in its neighbourhood. Its ancient name

“Krenides” (from κρήνη, a spring) is reminiscent of the first feature, and close at hand were the gold mines of Mount Pangaens, the “Rand” of the ancient world. Philip of Macedon at the outset of his career of conquest had noted the value of the site and had lost no time in making it his own. It was admirably adapted for defensive purposes, and a fortress was soon built to keep in check the inhabitants of Thrace which Philip now added to his dominions. Its rich output of gold, amounting it is said to ten thousand talents yearly, provided him with a revenue for the equipment of the sea and land forces which he required for the extension of his dominion. The citadel built by him stood on the height commanding the main road leading from West to East, and its ruins are still in evidence. The Empire founded by the King of Macedon and immeasurably extended by his more renowned son, Alexander, was comparatively short-lived and in its entirety did not survive the death of the latter, but it left an indelible mark upon the character of the Macedonian people which is still discernible in the Christians of Macedonia as we find them represented in St Paul’s Epistles to the Macedonian Churches. The subjects of Philip and Alexander were a simple, hardy, and proud race and of tougher fibre than the more renowned inhabitants of Southern Greece. It was the Macedonian and not the Athenian who made Greek civilisation world-wide and it was the Macedonians who longest withstood the attacks of the rising power of Rome. A statement of Mommsen’s is worth quoting in this connection. “In stedfast resistance to the public enemy under whatever name, in unshaken fidelity towards their native country and their hereditary government, and in persevering courage amidst the severest trials, no nation in ancient history bears so close a resemblance to the Roman people as the Macedonians” (*Hist. Rom.* II. p. 201, Everyman Ed.). That these qualities had not disappeared with the loss of their independence is seen from the Acts of the Apostles and St Paul’s Epistles. Here again we find a people remarkable for its adherence to the past and its keen jealousy of innovations, and equally distinguished by its affectionateness and fidelity when once its confidence has been gained. The Macedonians of the Pauline Churches are still generous, proud, independent, zealous, and active and, in consequence, prone to factiousness, while their women preserve that position of honour and right of initiative which in the days long gone by had helped to make Macedonia a power in the world. It took three great wars before the Roman arms finally prevailed over



them and it was not until the year 168 B.C. that Macedonian independence and its rule over Greece were destroyed at the decisive battle of Pydna. The Macedonian monarchy ceased to exist 144 years after the death of Alexander and the territory was divided into the four districts of Amphipolis, Thessalonica, Pella, and Pelagonia, but this arrangement was modified owing to the outbreak of another Macedonian war in 149 B.C., when the Roman power finally prevailed over the whole of Greece. In 146 B.C. Macedonia and Epirus were formed into the Roman Province of Macedonia with Thessalonica as its capital, while the remainder of Greece became the Province of Achaia with Corinth, which had been sacked and burnt a short time before but now rose anew out of its ashes, as the seat of the Roman Proconsul.

### *Philippi under the Romans.*

Philippi first came into prominence as a city of the Empire as the result of the decisive battles which were fought in its vicinity in 42 B.C. To mark the importance of that event it was formed into a Roman colony in that year with the title of "Colonia Julia Victrix Philippensis", and the coinage of the period upon which the phrase "cohors praet. Phil" is found seems to suggest that its first citizens consisted of veterans belonging to the body-guard of the victors in that fight. Eleven years afterwards when Antony had been finally defeated at Actium there was a second influx of Romans into the city in the persons of the soldiers of Antony who were banished from Italy and transplanted into Philippi. To celebrate Octavian's second victory Philippi now received an additional title "Colonia Augusta Julia Philippensis" and the privilege of the "jus Italicum" was conferred upon its Roman citizens. This meant that the colonists were exempt from the oversight of the provincial Governor, that they were not subject to poll and property tax, and that their rights to property in the soil were regulated by Roman law.

Our knowledge of the condition of Philippi as a Roman colony is derived mainly from inscriptions which have been discovered in the vicinity, of which about a hundred survive. Their value consists chiefly in the light which they throw upon the religious life of the city, and the most interesting of them all is a list of 69 names of the members of a guild, which was probably a burial club, associated with the cult of Silvanus, an ancient Italian god, in whose honour they had built a temple. The last name on the list is Valerius

Clemens, which reminds us that among the Philippian Christians mentioned by St Paul in our Epistle is "Clement", one of his fellow-workers, a point of interest as showing that the name was a familiar one in Philippi. In the matter of its religious life, however, Philippi, like most Roman cities of the period, and more especially Rome itself, was extremely cosmopolitan and provided a home for a wide variety of religious systems. Deities of such diverse characters as Diana and Minerva, the Thracian Dionysus, who in the neighbouring Mount Pangaeus had the most famous of his sanctuaries, the Phrygian god Men, whose worship had close affinities with the Thracian cult, and the worship of the Roman Emperor, all had their votaries in the city, and the inscriptions bear witness to the activity of all these religious factors.

The ruins still in existence show that the city in Roman days was divided into two parts, a higher and a lower city, by the great Imperial road, the Via Egnatia, which passed through it. In the former were the citadel originally built by Philip of Macedon and the temple of Silvanus mentioned above, while in the lower city were situated the Greek theatre, rebuilt by the Romans, which stood at the right hand of the gate by which the Egnatian road enters from the East, the market-place, the forum, as well as a small square in which stood the courts of justice. At the foot of the hill upon which the citadel was placed there may still be seen the remains of four massive columns, marking perhaps the site of the forum, or, as some scholars think, that of great Roman baths. In its political and social aspects as well as in its religious life Philippi was a miniature Rome, and of all its privileges and possessions it prized most the fact that it was a Roman city. This point is brought out very clearly in the narrative of St Paul's first visit to Philippi in Acts xvi. 11-40.

It was ruled by *duumviri* who delighted to ape the dignity of their Roman prototypes and to call themselves "praetors" and their attendants "lictors", and the crowning offence of St Paul and his companions was that "they set forth customs which it is not lawful for us (Philippians) to observe being *Romans*". Its strategical importance, which had attracted the attention of Philip centuries before, was further developed by the Romans. It was situated on the main artery, the Via Egnatia, which connected Rome with the distant provinces of the East and stood where the Balkan range descended into a pass, the only possible outlet for a great highway in the

district. At a distance of eight miles only was the harbour of Neapolis which afforded the only spacious and safe anchorage on that coast. These two factors offered excellent facilities for the purposes of trade, and it became consequently the centre of a large commercial traffic. A characteristic illustration of this is found in the narrative in the Acts where the mention of Lydia and her calling shows that it had considerable interests in the dyeing industry whose centre was at Thyatira.

The precise political position of Philippi at this time has been the subject of much discussion. St Luke in Acts xvi. 12 describes it as "a city of Macedonia, the first of the district, a Roman colony". The exact meaning of "the first city of the district" is very uncertain. If the reading is correct, and this is a matter on which doubt has been thrown (cf. Westcott and Hort, Vol. II. Note on Acts xvi. 12), we seem to have to choose between two solutions, one of which is offered by Ramsay and the other by Marquardt, the great historian of the Roman constitution.

Sir W. Ramsay (*St Paul the Traveller*, p. 206) is of opinion that the description emanates from St Luke's patriotism and pride in a city in which he evidently took no small interest and of which he was probably a native. In his love for Philippi he exaggerated to some extent the position of the city and sought to vindicate its position as against Amphipolis, its neighbouring rival. The phrase represents perhaps the position to which Philippi aspired rather than the one it actually attained, although its aspirations were to be realised at no very distant date. Marquardt (*Röm. Staatsverfassung*, I. 188) regards the expression "first" as referring solely to the precedence in the festival associated with the national games. For the purpose of the festival cities were graded as of first, second, third, or fourth rank, and St Luke is here thinking of the proud position of Philippi as a city of the "first" grade.

It is simpler perhaps to explain the phrase as being due to St Luke's not unnatural pride in a city which he regarded as his own, either by birth or adoption, which led him to claim for it a position which it demanded for itself but was not accorded to it by general consent. The description at any rate illustrates his attachment to Philippi and his anxiety to vindicate its honour. He would tell us that it was a city of a great land, Macedonia, and above all that it was a Roman colony. It is significant that, although several cities are mentioned in the course of his narrative of St Paul's travels which were Roman

colonies, Philippi is the only instance where this privilege is definitely mentioned.

One more feature remains to be noted before we close our sketch of Philippi and its life: there were apparently only a few Jews resident in it. In the narrative in Acts xvi. we are reminded that the Jews of Philippi were not numerous enough to possess a synagogue of their own and no strictly Jewish converts are mentioned. This accords with the general tone of our Epistle, which seems to imply that there was no strong Jewish influence in the Philippian Church or in Philippian circles outside of it. This peculiarity can hardly have been due to the fact that Philippi was not large enough to attract Jews and is probably to be explained by the keen desire of the Roman colony to imitate the example of Rome in its hostility towards Jews as in other matters. Rome had recently banished the Jews from its borders and the Philippians may have manifested a similar tendency. A hint of the prevalent state of feeling is perhaps given in Acts xvi. 21, "These men, *being Jews*, do exceedingly trouble our city".

## II. ST PAUL AT PHILIPPI.

There is no stage in the history of the extension of the Church of Christ in the Empire as related in the Acts which is described with more solemnity of language and wealth of detail than that which witnessed the arrival of the Pauline Gospel on European soil. The entrance of St Paul into Macedonia shares with his arrival in Rome the privilege of being, in St Luke's mind, the most important step in the Apostle's missionary life, "the one the opening campaign of the Gospel in the West, the other its crowning triumph" (Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, p. 237). It is impossible to read the narrative in Acts xvi. 6-11 without realising the transcendent meaning of the movement into Greece for both St Paul and the writer, St Luke. We are shown how at every crisis the Apostle's steps are guided by the Spirit of God. It is the "Holy Spirit" that forbids him "to speak the word in Asia": it is "the Spirit of Jesus" that "suffered him not to go into Bithynia": it is a vision from God that invites him "to come over to Macedonia": and it is the conviction that "God had called him to preach the Gospel to the Macedonians" that finally determined his plans. Various reasons have been suggested to account for the remarkable emphasis placed in the narrative



upon the successive stages which led the Apostle to decide to cross the Aegean. It has been well pointed out by Ramsay (*St Paul the Traveller*, pp. 198–200) that it was not the geographical factor that was at the root of it ; that historians at that time did not think in continents as we do to-day, and that there was no real distinction between the lands on either side of the Aegean. Greece and Asia Minor were only two divisions of the Roman Empire, closely connected by ties of common language and culture, and the line of distinction was not between European and Asiatic provinces but between the Greek provinces of the East and the Latin provinces of the West. Ramsay attributes St Luke's supreme interest in this action of St Paul to the fact that he was a resident of Philippi and probably the Macedonian of the vision at Troas. He also suggests that St Paul's determination to abandon Asia Minor for the time and to extend his mission across the Aegean was largely due to the influence of St Luke. That St Luke was intensely interested in this particular movement and that he regarded Macedonia and all that concerned it with special affection, lie on the surface of his narrative, but I should hesitate to follow Ramsay all the way and I doubt whether St Luke's connection with Philippi was as close and as definite as he makes it out to be. Tradition is strongly against his suggestion and the markedly Greek characteristics of St Luke, which are specially emphasised by Ramsay himself, would seem to connect him with another city than Philippi which was Macedonian and Roman rather than Greek. The narrative in the Acts implies that he had at that time no residence in Philippi, seeing that St Paul and his companions had to take up their abode with Lydia. His manifest interest in Philippi and his affection for it can be satisfactorily explained by the consideration that he was closely connected with the founding of the Church there and that he remained in the city for some considerable time after the Apostle's departure, taking perhaps no small part in the subsequent development of the young Christian community. The affectionate disposition of the Church towards St Paul would be extended to his companion and physician and would have precisely the same effect in the two cases : it would bind them closely to the Philippian converts and would serve to register in their minds the founding of the Church of Philippi as an event never to be forgotten.

The appeal of Macedonia to both St Paul and St Luke may also be partially explained by the close connection between that country

and the Hellenistic cities of Asia Minor to which the Apostle certainly and the Evangelist probably belonged. It was the conquests of Alexander of Macedon that had been the main agent of the diffusion of Greek life, culture, and institutions in the East, and in the mind of the historian there may have been present the idea that the debt was now to be repaid and that "the tide which flowed West to East was now to roll back by the same channel, laden with a nobler treasure by which Asia more than discharged the obligation of Europe" (Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, p. 240).

To the present writer, however, the vividness and emphasis of St Luke's narrative seem to be mainly due to the historian's consciousness that the crossing of the Aegean and the mission to Macedonia formed the first definite steps on the road to Rome, and if this be the case the narrative falls into line with what is the governing motive of the Acts as a whole, viz. to describe the progress of the Gospel from Jerusalem to the Imperial city. The record of St Paul's missionary activity in the Acts up to this point seems to imply that the Apostle had as yet no wider view of his mission than the evangelising of the great centres of life in Asia Minor and that Rome as the ultimate aim and climax of his work was still below the horizon. The whole of the passage, Acts xvi. 6-11, with its account of the repeated attempts to visit one district after another in Asia Minor, every one of which was nullified by the intervention of the Spirit of God, is St Luke's way of showing how the conviction that Rome was to be the Apostle's true destination arose in his mind and of enabling us to realise how he himself regarded the mission to Macedonia as the decisive event in the movement which was eventually to bring St Paul to the Imperial capital. The historian is writing years after the event, and he reflects upon it in the light of later experiences which had taught him the full meaning of the coming of St Paul to Rome. Something of the vividness and fulness of the narrative were doubtless due to St Luke's Macedonian and Philippian sympathies, but of infinitely greater importance was the fact that Rome and Christianised Rome filled the historian's eye and that the mission to Macedonia and the founding of the Church of Philippi, itself a Roman colony, were the first conscious turning of St Paul's steps in the direction of the capital of the Empire.

It was during what is conventionally called the "Second Missionary Journey" and, according to the system of chronology adopted in this volume, about the beginning of the summer of 50 A.D. that

St Paul and his companions, Silas, Timothy, with the addition of St Luke, whose presence for the first time in the Apostle's company is indicated by the use of "we" in the narrative, set sail from the harbour of Troas. The voyage across the Aegean, which is described by St Luke by the single Greek word *εὐθυδρομήσαμεν* (we made a straight course), was apparently accompanied by unusually favourable conditions, and a journey which a few years later took five days (Acts xx. 6) was now accomplished in two, a fact which might well have filled the heart of the Apostle with the hope that the mission to be undertaken might be as successful as the initial voyage. No time was spent at Neapolis, the port of landing, and the Apostolic band wended its way towards Philippi, travelling along the Imperial highway for some eight miles or so.

In the record of St Paul's activities given in Acts xvi. 11-40 attention is concentrated upon three main incidents. We shall dwell on them only as far as they help to illustrate the social and religious life of Philippi and the effect of the Gospel message upon the first European community to which it was addressed.

### 1. *The Conversion of Lydia.*

#### (a) *The absence of Jews from Philippi.*

We have already commented upon the comparative absence of Jews from Philippi. In this respect it offered a marked contrast to the cities of Asia Minor which had been the scenes of the Apostle's activities earlier. At Salamis in Cyprus, Antioch in Pisidia, and at Iconium he had found a synagogue of the Jews and had utilised it as a first means of approach to a new community, but at Philippi the Jews were not sufficiently numerous to establish and maintain a synagogue and had to be content with a "proseucha", or place of prayer, which was found in the open air on the banks of the river Gangites (the modern Angista). It was an old custom of the Jews to gather for worship by the river side as we learn from Ezra viii. 15, 21, and from Tertullian (*Ad Nat.* i. 13), who tells us that the practice of "prayers on the shore" (*orationes littorales*) was maintained among the Jews of his days.

#### (b) *The influence of the "God-fearing" Gentiles upon the progress of the Gospel.*

There is no mention of Jews proper among those who were converted "at the beginning of the Gospel" at Philippi and the one

prominent name in the narrative is that of a woman, Lydia, perhaps taking her name from her country, "a Lydian lady" (see note on iv. 2), a purple-seller from Thyatira, who had probably been a devotee of the Phrygian god, Men. She had, however, been attracted by the pure monotheism and strict morality of the Jews and had accepted a modified form of Judaism, complying in some degree with the practices and customs of Jewish law and ceremonial. It has been remarked that Christianity in its early days was successful, not because it converted the convinced members of other cults, but because it attracted the "honorary members" who were more or less loosely attached to the different religious systems (Lake, *Stewardship of Faith*, pp. 75, 76). This is unquestionably true of the Jews as a body, and it was the Gentile "God-fearers", that class of "honorary members" that clung to the robes of Judaism, and not the Jews proper that provided a rich harvest for the labourers of Christ. No one recognised more clearly the importance of this religious type than St Paul, and throughout the whole of his missionary career he utilised the "God-fearer" as the way of approach to the world of pure paganism. In this respect Lydia proved worthy of her designation and showed herself as receptive of the higher message of the Christian Gospel as she had been of the truths of the Jewish faith, and she was privileged to be not only the first Christian disciple at Philippi but also the hostess of the Apostolic company during its stay in that city, while her house formed the centre of the Christian mission.

(c) *The position of women at Philippi.*

Not less striking than the fact that the first Philippian to respond to the appeal of the Gospel was a "God-fearing" Gentile was the other fact that this first convert was a woman. That the position of women in Macedonia was on a higher plane than in almost any country in the ancient world is amply proved by inscriptions discovered in the district, among which there are several connected with monuments erected in honour of women by public bodies, while the tone of the inscriptions as a whole gives a prominence to women which was not usual in that age (see Lightfoot's note, p. 56). The story of Lydia, who was apparently a widow and in good circumstances, is an apt illustration of the freedom and initiative allowed to women in a Macedonian city. The unusual respect paid to women had a marked effect upon the future development of the Philippian



Church for both good and evil. The interest and sympathy of the women were probably not a little concerned in the affectionate care which that Church bestowed upon the Apostle's welfare in the years to come, but, on the other hand, some, if not all, of the troubles which in later years disturbed the peace of that Church were caused by feminine jealousies.

## 2. *The Ventriloquist.*

### (a) *Christianity in its relation to slavery and to pagan religion.*

This incident is interesting as illustrating the first recorded encounter of St Paul with a slave, a member of that class which formed at least half the population of the ancient world. Not the least among the services rendered by Christianity to humanity has been the liberation of the slave, and we may see in the girl "with the spirit of divination" the firstfruits of that great movement which slowly but surely has led to the complete abolition of slavery wherever the religion of Christ has its full sway. The story also enables us to realise how in the realm of pure paganism, as well as in that section of it which had made considerable advances towards Jewish monotheism, the soil had been prepared for the reception of the more exalted and permanent conceptions of the Christian faith. The highly nervous temperament of the "ventriloquist" (this is probably what is meant by the expression "with a spirit of divination") which made her more sensitive to a religious appeal than other people, recognised in the message of the Apostle terms and expressions with which she was already familiar. He proclaimed "the most High God" and came offering "salvation". That "the God Most High", with a very different connotation doubtless from that found in St Paul's preaching, was an object of worship in the pagan world is clearly proved by inscriptions, and the "Mystery Religions" which were beginning to flood the Graeco-Roman world from the East spoke of a "salvation" which included the raising of the soul above the transiency of the perishable world as well as the gift of immortal life through union with the Divine.

### (b) *The persecution of Christianity by the State.*

Of equal importance is the light which the narrative throws upon the beginning of the persecution of the Christian Church by the Roman power. The real motive of the uproar which resulted in the



appearance of Paul and Silas before the *duumviri* was not connected with religion in any way, but was based entirely upon financial considerations, as was the case at Ephesus a few years later (Acts xix. 23-41). It was the loss of the profits which accrued to them from the girl's gift of divination and ventriloquism that raised the ire of her owners (the plural "masters" probably indicates two brothers, as the word is often found in that sense in *papyri*), but they were ingenious enough to frame a charge which placed the Apostles in considerable danger. They paraded their loyalty to Rome, utilised the general prejudice against Jews, and accused Paul and Silas of introducing a religion which was illegal according to the Imperial laws and interfered with customs, religious and social, which were incumbent upon every true Roman. We recognise in the very terms of the charge the origin of that movement which in days to come was to assume momentous proportions and to involve the Church and the Empire in deadly conflict.

### 3. *The conversion of the Jailor.*

Roman justice as a whole, with the exception of the conduct of Pontius Pilate, is pictured in favourable colours in the New Testament, but in the process at Philippi which involved the flogging of Paul and Silas and their incarceration in the "inner prison" no official seems to have risen to the high ideals of Roman judicial methods save the jailor. There can be nothing but the severest condemnation for the primary action of the magistrates who allowed themselves to be overwhelmed by the mob and were in consequence unable to take a calm and judicial view of the proceedings or to give the prisoners an opportunity of asserting their rights as Roman citizens. The Apostle's experiences at Philippi were, however, in marked contrast to what he had learnt elsewhere to expect from the Roman provincial authorities, where he had invariably found them a protection against the implacable hostility of the Jews and a harbour of safety in many a tumultuous storm.

Glancing over the narrative of the evangelising of Philippi as a whole we see Christianity at the very outset of its career in contact with three distinct types of humanity, to each of which it was to render unique service in the days to come, the woman, the slave, and the official. Arising out of this contact are two other factors, both of them important and of considerable influence upon the

future of Christianity on its social and institutional sides. It is at Philippi that we have the first clear picture of the religion of Christ as *the religion of the family*. Lydia and her household were baptized and the jailor again and all his were baptized and rejoiced in the newly-found salvation, and it is only natural to assume that there were in both houses children as well as adult believers and that the blessings of Christ were extended to them also. So, very simply and very joyfully, there was laid the foundation of the Christian home and the Christian family, possibly the most powerful influences in the Christian Church of the future. Closely connected with the religion of the family was the institution of the "House-Church", a striking feature of primitive Christian life and the prototype of the organised Churches and ecclesiastical assemblies and buildings of later days. The first corporate gathering of Christians at Philippi was held in the house of Lydia, and this eventually developed into the Philippian Church to which our Epistle was addressed. We read also of the Church in the house of Aquila and Priscilla both at Ephesus and Rome (1 Cor. xvi. 19, Rom. xvi. 5), and of the Church in the house of Nymphas at Laodicea (Col. iv. 15), which doubtless followed the same line of development as that in the house of Lydia. It is thought by many scholars that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written to such a "House-Church" in Rome.

Two very clear impressions are gained from the story we have been considering, first the *cosmopolitanism* of the religious life at Philippi, which included the Gentile "God-fearer", the devotee of Apollo, and the worshipper of the ancient gods of Rome, who was also probably a confirmed adherent of the cult of the Emperor, and secondly the *comprehensiveness* of the Christian Church in which all these various types found a home and a realisation of their highest hopes.

### *St Paul's later intercourse with Philippi.*

The Apostle's first and momentous visit to Philippi, which came to such an abrupt and violent end, was followed by two if not three later visits. When his three years' ministry at Ephesus was brought to a sudden termination by the action of the silversmiths he proceeded to Macedonia (2 Cor. ii. 12, vii. 5, 6) where he spent a time of anxious waiting for the arrival of Titus from Corinth. It was during this period of gloom that the Second Epistle to the Corinthians was written, and it is well within the bounds of probability that it

was written at Philippi itself, where he would receive the affectionate sympathy that he so greatly needed and which, judging from the tone of the Epistle, proved effective. A few months later on his way from Corinth to Jerusalem he kept the Paschal Feast with his beloved Philippians (Acts xx. 5, 6). In our Epistle (ii. 24) he expresses his intention of paying them a still further visit, and if we accept 1 Timothy as a genuine Pauline letter a visit to Macedonia is implied in 1 Tim. i. 3. During the period which intervened between the Apostle's first visit to Philippi and the writing of this Epistle he seems to have received several gifts from the Philippians. He refers in terms of grateful acknowledgment to at least two such instances of generosity in Phil. iv. 15, 16, and the main practical purpose of the Epistle is to thank them for still another contribution towards his necessities.

*The later history of the Philippian Church.*

The later history of the Church is sad reading. We hear of it in connection with two of the great Apostolic Fathers and Martyrs, St Ignatius and St Polycarp, the bishops of Antioch and of Smyrna respectively. The former when, about the year 117, he was on his way as a prisoner from Antioch to Rome where he was to die for the faith, followed in the footsteps of St Paul and passed along the Via Egnatia through Troas, Neapolis, and Philippi. In the latter city he was welcomed by the local Church, which evidently preserved the ideals of affection and sympathy which made it so precious in St Paul's sight, and was reverently escorted on his departure. Subsequently the Philippian Christians wrote two letters, one to the bishop's own flock at Antioch to sympathise with it on its irreparable loss, and one to St Polycarp requesting him to send them copies of the letters which St Ignatius had written during the earlier part of his journey to the Churches of Asia Minor. St Polycarp responded to their appeal and sent them a letter of his own which throws some light on the internal condition of the Philippian Church at this period. In some respects it had already fallen from its high estate and its fair fame was clouded by a somewhat glaring case of dishonesty and greed among its officials, a sad declension from the generosity and disregard of wealth for which it was distinguished in its earlier days.

The Church is casually mentioned by Tertullian and the names of some of its bishops are found among the subscribers to the decrees

of Church Councils held in the fourth and fifth centuries. After that a complete darkness falls upon its history. To quote the words of Bishop Lightfoot: "Of the Church which stood foremost among the Apostolic communities in faith and love it may be literally said that not one stone stands upon another. Born into the world with the highest promise, the Church of Philippi has lived without a history and died without a memorial" (*Philippians*, p. 65). The ruins of the city provide rich material wherewith to illustrate its pagan life, but have little to tell of its Christian Church. The city itself has vanished completely out of sight and cattle browse in the meadows where once it proudly stood. It is some slight consolation to know that the spot where the Church dearest to St Paul's heart was once found has within the last few years been recovered after centuries of Turkish misrule and now forms once again a part of the Christian world.

### III. WHERE WAS THE EPISTLE WRITTEN ?

If the question at the head of this section had been asked ten years ago we should have replied without hesitation that it was written either at Rome or Caesarea and that the balance of probability was decidedly in favour of the former. Recently, however, a new claimant for the honour of having given birth to the "Epistles of the Captivity" has arisen, and many first rate authorities are strongly supporting the claims of Ephesus to have been the city where some of these Epistles first saw light. To return to the old controversy between Caesarea and Rome, there does not seem to be much weight in the arguments adduced in support of Caesarea as the place where the Epistle was written, and if we have to confine our choice to one or other of these two localities, the preference must be given to Rome. It is not impossible to make a case of some kind on behalf of Caesarea with reference to the Colossian-Ephesian-Philemon group<sup>1</sup>, but the contents of our Epistle are decisively against any connection of the letter with that city. There are two indications in the Epistle which ought to enable us to identify the place of writing. In i. 13 St Paul tells us that "his bonds became manifest in Christ in the whole Praetorium" (margin R.V.), and in

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<sup>1</sup> See an article by the Bishop of Lincoln (Dr Hicks) in the *Interpreter*, April, 1910.



iv. 22 salutations are sent to the Philippian Church from "the saints...especially they that are of Caesar's household". Now it is true that "Praetorium" is used to designate the residence of a provincial Governor and is actually applied to the Governor's residence at Caesarea in Acts xxiii. 35, but the great majority of scholars are of opinion that the term here is used of persons and not of a place and that it refers either to the Praetorian Guard or to the Imperial tribunal presided over by the Praetorian Prefect (see note on i. 13). The addition of the expression "to all the rest" strongly supports the personal as against the local meaning of the term. If we accept this rendering the reference is much more natural if connected with Rome, where the headquarters of the Praetorian Guard and the Imperial tribunal were situated, than with Caesarea which had neither the one nor the other. The second passage is still more decisive, and it is difficult to see how "the household of Caesar" could mean any institution outside of Rome itself.

Then again the Apostle's situation and surroundings as depicted in this Epistle tell strongly in favour of Rome. He is manifestly in touch with a large and active Christian Church, composed of various sections whose character corresponds with what we know of the Roman Church and its conditions from the Acts and the Epistle to the Romans. There is no evidence that Caesarea was the centre of any such Christian activity as is pictured here, and the Apostle's own operations, his close interest in the work of the local Church, the effect of his presence upon it, the free access to him of a large circle of friends, the sending and receiving of letters and messengers do not fit in with the comparative unimportance of Caesarea nor with the character of his imprisonment in that city, whereas they all point to a large and busy centre like Rome. Another factor which points in the same direction is that the Apostle in our Epistle speaks hopefully of the prospect of a speedy release and termination of his case, to be followed by a visit to Philippi. Now at Caesarea he must have been well aware that the issue could not be decided there, and, even if release had come, his thoughts were not turned towards the Churches of the East but towards Rome, now the centre of all his hopes. The Epistle also speaks of the dangerous and critical position of the Apostle at the time of writing, but at Caesarea he stood in no peril, and real danger only began to threaten him when his appeal to Caesar was on the point of being heard. Those who argue in favour of Caesarea make much of the fact that nothing



is known of Timothy, who was in the Apostle's company when the letter was being written, having been in Rome, but the same difficulty may be cited in the case of Caesarea. There is no actual evidence that Timothy accompanied St Paul to the latter city. He was certainly among the Apostle's companions during the early stages of the last journey to Jerusalem, but his name drops out after the sojourn at Troas. He may have travelled with them to Jerusalem and subsequently joined the Apostle at Caesarea, but it is much more probable that he was detached and sent on some mission which kept him fully employed for some years and that he did not find himself again in the Apostle's neighbourhood until the latter arrived as a prisoner in Rome. The argument from the style of the Epistle, which seems to connect it closely with the great central group of Epistles, will be discussed in another place. To sum up, if our choice lies between Caesarea and Rome there can be no question but that the decision is definitely in favour of Rome.

The claims of Ephesus are, however, much stronger than those of Caesarea, and it is much more difficult to come to an absolute decision in this case. As the Ephesian theory is comparatively new and has not been considered in any previous Commentary on the Epistle, as far as I am aware, it is necessary to discuss it here at some considerable length.

It might appear that Ephesus is ruled out at the very outset by the fact that St Paul is not known to have been imprisoned there, but this is precisely what the advocates of the theory claim to be able to prove.

The first scholar to suggest the possibility that St Paul was actually imprisoned at Ephesus and wrote the Epistles of the Captivity there was H. Lisco of Berlin in 1890. Since that time the theory has been received with favour by Deissmann (*Light from the Ancient East*, pp. 229-231), Albertz (*Studien und Kritiken*, 1910, pp. 551 ff.), and the American scholar B. W. Robinson (*American Journal of Biblical Literature*, 1910, II.), and that it is by no means as fanciful as may appear at first sight is proved by the fact that it has enlisted the sympathy of Kirsopp Lake, B. W. Bacon, and E. W. Winstanley (*Expositor*, June, 1914, March and June, 1915). The arguments in favour of an Ephesian imprisonment may be briefly summed up as follows :

1. It is evident from 2 Cor. xi. 23 where St Paul speaks of himself as "in prisons more abundantly" as well as from the evidence

of Clement of Rome, who describes the Apostle as having been "seven times in bonds", that the Acts does not give a complete list of the Apostle's imprisonments. It is possible, therefore, that one or more of those not mentioned in the Acts are to be connected with Ephesus, where we know St Paul to have been at one period in considerable danger from the hostility of both the pagan and Jewish elements of the population.

2. This possibility is considerably strengthened by the language of the Epistles to the Corinthians. In 1 Cor. xv. 30, 31, 32 we find the Apostle making use of the following expressions with reference to his situation at Ephesus at the time of writing. "Why do we also stand in jeopardy every hour"? "I die daily", "I fought with beasts at Ephesus", language which is interpreted to mean that he had actually been imprisoned, tried, and condemned to death but had, in some way not known to us, escaped the extreme penalty. The gravity of the Apostle's position at Ephesus is also confirmed by the tone of 2 Corinthians as e.g. i. 8-9, "We despaired even of life, yea we ourselves have had the answer (sentence) of death within ourselves...God who delivered us out of so great a death": iv. 8-10, "pursued yet not forsaken, smitten down yet not destroyed, always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus": vi. 9, "As dying, and behold, we live". These passages, we are told, can only mean that St Paul had been face to face with death and had been saved by the merciful interposition of providence.

3. Many scholars are of opinion that the last chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is not an integral part of that Epistle and that its original destination was Ephesus and not Rome. If this hypothesis is correct the chapter is said to afford strong confirmation of the supposed imprisonment of St Paul at Ephesus. In Rom. xvi. 7, he describes Andronicus and Junias as "my fellow-prisoners" and where could they have shared his prison except at Ephesus? Again in xvi. 3 he speaks of Aquila and Priscilla as having "for my life laid down their necks" and where could they have risked their lives for the Apostle's sake if not at Ephesus where they were his close companions and fellow-workers?

Further, it is contended that the evidence of the language of the New Testament in this direction is confirmed by tradition of a threefold character.

(a) There is in existence at Ephesus to-day a tower which is called "St Paul's Prison".

(b) The tradition is also found in the "Acts of Paul and Thekla", a document which in the opinion of those who are qualified to judge goes back to the second century and is generally trustworthy in its historical details.

(c) The "Monarchian Prologue" to the Epistle to the Colossians reads "Ergo apostolus *jam ligatus* scribit eis ab Epheso". These "Prologues" are of the nature of short introductions to the Pauline Epistles published in some versions of the Vulgate, and, according to Corsen, they are based on Marcionite tradition and are, therefore, of considerable value as evidence of second-century beliefs.

This twofold line of evidence, that of the New Testament as well as that of an early tradition so well authenticated, is said to establish beyond a doubt an imprisonment of St Paul at Ephesus.

Now if we acknowledge the possible truth of this theory the question then arises whether any or all of the Epistles of the Captivity could have been written during such an imprisonment. The scholars who maintain that this is the case are not agreed among themselves as to which of the Epistles to assign to this particular captivity. Deissmann is inclined to place all the Epistles of the Captivity here, but his language is not so positive in the case of our Epistle as it is with regard to the other three, while B. W. Robinson would confine his theory to the Colossian-Ephesian-Philemon group. Albertz, who is the strongest advocate of an Ephesian imprisonment and has dealt with the theory much more fully than any other writer, argues in favour of placing the composition of the Epistle to the Philippians only at Ephesus, a position with which Kirsopp Lake finds himself in sympathy.

The case for placing the writing of this Epistle at Ephesus as stated by Albertz is a strong one and his arguments are telling almost to the point of conviction. They may be summarised as follows :

1. The style and content of the Epistle to the Philippians bind it closely with the great central group of letters, those to Corinth, Rome, and the Churches of Galatia, and if it was written at Ephesus much about the time that the letters to the Corinthians were written we are rid of the difficulty which confronts the Roman theory, viz. the adoption of one style of writing in the Corinthian and Roman letters, of another style in the Colossian-Ephesian group, and then a reversion to the original style in our Epistle.

2. The Apostle's own situation and his relationship to the Philippian Church are more intelligible if the Epistle was written at Ephesus and not at Rome. The frequent communications between St Paul and Philippi and the journeys of Epaphroditus would be much more practicable if the Apostle was at Ephesus, within comparatively easy reach, than if he was in Rome, some hundreds of miles away. The Epistle also implies that the Philippians were perfectly acquainted with his circumstances and that there was no need to enter into any detailed description of these. His imprisonment is only casually referred to and only then as a fact which was well known to them. The intimate intercourse which such a close acquaintance with the Apostle's condition implies was much simpler between Philippi and Ephesus than between Philippi and Rome. St Paul's plans for the future also point in the same direction. His most urgent desire if he is released is to return to Philippi, and that not because there was any serious trouble in that community which demanded his presence, but merely because of his earnest longing to see his beloved Church again. From his Roman prison his eyes were turned towards the farther West and not backwards to the Churches of the East, whereas from Ephesus Philippi would be the most natural place to visit once he had regained his freedom. As a matter of fact we know that he did actually proceed from Ephesus to Macedonia when he was forced to depart hurriedly from that city (Acts xx. 1; 2 Cor. ii. 12). Further, there is no trace in our Epistle of any preaching activity on the Apostle's part, which is inconsistent with the situation at Rome as outlined in Acts xxviii. 31. His one grievance in our letter is that while others are active he is condemned to silence. He cannot preach, his adversaries can (i. 12-19).

3. The two references to the "Praetorium" and to the "household of Caesar" which are generally regarded as pointing definitely to Rome are equally applicable to Ephesus.

*The Praetorium.* Ephesus satisfies the conditions whether we regard this term as referring to a building or to a body of men. If we accept the former meaning the expression would stand for the residence of the Roman Governor of the province of Asia situated in that city, and the phrase "throughout the whole Praetorium" would imply that St Paul had appeared before the proconsular tribunal and that he and his case were known to all who were concerned in his trial. If we take "Praetorium" as representing the "Praetorian Guard" it is known that a section of the Imperial



body-guard was often sent on special duty to the provincial capitals, (Mommsen, *Hist. Rom.* iv. p. 323). This is confirmed by epigraphic evidence, for among the epitaphs discovered at Ephesus are found the names of "praetorians" (see Wood's *Discoveries at Ephesus*, 1877). It would also be much easier for St Paul to make himself known to a detachment of 200 "praetorians" in Ephesus than to the whole Praetorian corps in Rome which numbered about 9000 men.

*The household of Caesar.* This is a term which is used to designate the freedmen and slaves attached to the Imperial court. Now the evidence of inscriptions reveals the fact that not only were there resident in Ephesus individuals answering to this description but that there were actually "colleges" composed of these two classes to be found in that city (Newton's *Collections of Greek Inscriptions in the British Museum*, edited by Hicks).

4. The description in i. 15-17 of the Christians who "preach Christ of envy and strife" and "proclaim Christ of faction" harmonises well with what we know of the situation at Ephesus. In this city there was probably a section of Christians associated with the name of Apollos, analogous to the "Apollos party" at Corinth, which was animated by ignoble motives and took advantage of the Apostle's bonds to push itself into the foreground. Apollos is known to have been in residence at Ephesus both before and during St Paul's ministry there, and his method of teaching would meet with a ready response in a city where the Greek spirit was strong and where Alexandrian ideas prevailed. The tone of ii. 20 ff. is that of a man who bitterly resents the isolation in which he finds himself. Now at Ephesus he was surrounded by many Christians who were not his own children in the faith, such as Aquila and Priscilla, Apollos, Andronicus and Junias: and it may be that some of these promoted their own teaching while he was precluded by his bonds from all activity.

5. Finally, the opponents so fiercely denounced in iii. 1 b ff. were Judaisers with whom at the time of writing he was manifestly in bitter conflict. Now if the Epistle was written at Rome it is difficult to understand the recrudescence of the Judaistic controversy, seeing that St Paul had apparently many years before gained a complete victory over these particular opponents. If, on the other hand, the letter belongs to the period of the Ephesian ministry it saw light when the controversy was at its height and the presence of the outbreak against them in it becomes quite intelligible.



Such then briefly are the arguments by which it is sought to prove that St Paul underwent an imprisonment at Ephesus of a serious character and that the Epistle to the Philippians was written in the course of it. We are now in a position to examine the whole theory on its merits, and we shall first consider the validity of the suggestion that St Paul was in prison at Ephesus for some substantial period. There is no difficulty in agreeing that the Apostle must have had more frequent experiences of a prison than are recorded in the Acts, and it is quite possible that one or more of these may have been connected with Ephesus, but whether there was among them a period of imprisonment of the length implied in the Epistles of the Captivity is another question. St Luke's silence on the point is difficult to explain if an imprisonment of the character demanded by this theory ever took place. It is strange that, in spite of the gaps in his narrative, an event which exercised such a powerful influence upon St Paul's life and mind and was so fruitful in literary output should have so entirely escaped his notice. And further, the Apostle's address to the elders of the Church of Ephesus at Miletus (Acts xx. 18-38) is by general consent regarded as the most authentic of all the Pauline speeches in the Acts and may be an actual transcript of what the Apostle said on that occasion. The language of the address certainly implies a period of much distress and anxiety in Ephesus and the hostility of the Jews is definitely mentioned, but there is not the slightest allusion to anything approaching the imprisonment contemplated in this theory.

The general tone of the Epistles to the Corinthians and the particular expressions upon which so much stress is laid by the advocates of this suggestion by no means necessitate the interpretation put upon them. There are considerable difficulties connected with the literal acceptance of the phrase "I fought with beasts at Ephesus". If St Paul claimed his rights as a Roman citizen as he seems to have done, and with success, in other cases, this particular form of the death penalty was illegal. His language elsewhere, as e.g. in 2 Tim. iv. 17, where the word "lion" must be used in a metaphorical sense and the fact that St Ignatius uses precisely the same terms in referring to the soldiers who guarded him (Ep. to Romans v.) is strongly in favour of the metaphorical meaning of this passage. The expression "Why do we also stand in jeopardy every hour?" was true of Christians generally at that time.

The tone of 2 Corinthians again is adequately explained by what we actually know of the Apostle's situation at Ephesus and of the position of affairs at Corinth. He had only just escaped from a grave peril in the former city and the dissensions and moral condition of the Church of Corinth filled his heart with the direst forebodings. We need have no recourse to a hypothetical imprisonment and trial at Ephesus at this particular point in his history to account for the grave and anxious tone of his utterance.

The Ephesian destination of the last chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is much too problematical to afford firm ground for any argument for or against the theory.

The external evidence is also not without flaws. St Paul may have undergone an imprisonment at Ephesus of some kind but it is quite certain that the ruin which now bears the name of "St Paul's Prison" could never have been utilised for that purpose. Sir C. Wilson in his *Handbook to Asia Minor* describes it as "a two-storied fort with eight chambers, the upper story being reached by an outer staircase", a building eminently unsuitable for the safe custody of prisoners. It is of course possible that it might mark the site and retain the name of an earlier building.

The "Monarchian Prologue" to the Epistle to the Colossians seems to take it for granted that it was written from an Ephesian prison, but Corssen (*Zeitschrift für N.T. Wissenschaft*, 1909, Vol. I.) points out that the peculiar phrase "jam ligatus" refers to the well-known imprisonment towards the close of the Apostle's life and that the writer must have supposed that St Paul passed through Ephesus on his way from Caesarea to Rome and wrote the Epistle there. The "Prologue" would still be evidence of an early tradition that the Epistle was written from Ephesus although it may not be valid as proof of an imprisonment there. The balance of probabilities is, therefore, to my mind against an imprisonment at Ephesus of the length and character demanded by the Epistles of the Captivity, although it is quite possible that an imprisonment of some kind may have happened there.

But even if we allow that St Paul may have been in prison at Ephesus for a considerable period it by no means follows that our Epistle was written at that particular time. Two decided advantages are claimed for the theory.

1. It brings the Epistle within the period to which the other Epistles with which it has the greatest resemblances in style and

thought belong. There is, however, a growing tendency among scholars of the present day to discount the argument based upon similarity of style, and it is being increasingly recognised that the style and language of any particular Epistle depend mainly upon the local conditions of the Church addressed. The apparently successful attempt to make the Epistle to the Galatians the earliest of the Pauline Epistles and to separate it by a space of some years from the Epistle to the Romans, with which it has so much in common, bids us be cautious lest we attach too much weight to this factor in arriving at a decision concerning the date and origin of any Epistle.

2. The apparent recrudescence of the Judaistic controversy in iii. 1 b ff. is a real difficulty and has led many scholars to suspect the integrity of the Epistle and to suggest that we have a separate letter interpolated at this point, written many years earlier than the remainder of the canonical Epistle. Now if St Paul was at Ephesus when he wrote the Epistle the conflict with the Judaisers was at its height, and the outburst in iii. 1 ff. is quite natural and intelligible, and the above mentioned difficulty is disposed of. If, however, the passage in question has no connection with Judaisers, but was caused by the hostility of Jews, pure and simple, a perfectly reasonable hypothesis as we shall show later, there is no difficulty to dispose of and the advantage claimed by the Ephesian theory disappears.

There are also some very serious objections to the theory as it stands.

1. The letter is completely silent as to the "collection for the saints" which was the one practical matter upon which the whole mind of St Paul was bent when his Ephesian ministry was drawing to a close. It is mentioned in every Epistle known to have been written at this period, and it is unthinkable that, with his mind full of this Christian duty, the Apostle should write to the Philipian Church, which as we know from other sources was specially concerned with this bounty, and ignore that completely while he has much to say of the generosity of the Church towards himself.

2. The joyous, grateful tone of the Epistle is manifest even to the most superficial reader. Now if it originated at Ephesus somewhere about the time that the Epistles to the Corinthians were written it belongs to a period which was the most stormy and turbulent in the whole of St Paul's activity, when the Judaistic controversy was at its most bitter stage and when his own situation and that of the

Churches with which he was most closely concerned were of the gravest possible character. The Apostle was, as we know, a man of moods, but it is difficult to imagine even St Paul writing to the Philippians a letter which is overflowing with joy and gladness in the very thick of this "storm and stress".

3. The main weakness of the theory, however, consists in the fact that it is based upon pure conjecture in many particulars with regard to which, in the case of Rome, we are standing upon perfectly firm ground. We know that there was a "Praetorium" at Rome, whether we regard it as a building or a body of men, and we are equally positive that members of the "household of Caesar" were to be found in the Imperial palace at all times. It may be true that "praetorians" were occasionally stationed at Ephesus and that members of the "household of Caesar" were buried there, but we have no absolute knowledge that there were "praetorians" or Imperial slaves and freedmen in the city while St Paul lived there. Again there may have been an Apollos party at Ephesus but the suggestion is a mere conjecture for which there is not a particle of real evidence, while the situation depicted in the Epistle is in complete accord with what we might expect to find in Rome. There the Church was already in existence before the Apostle's appearance upon the scene, and it was proud of its independence and perhaps resented the intrusion of a stranger. Jewish influences were also strong in Rome, and these, combined with the anxiety of the Church to maintain its independence and its jealousy of interference from outside, would produce the condition of affairs which St Paul describes with some feeling.

An Ephesian imprisonment of some kind is quite possible and there is much that is attractive in dating our Epistle from that city. It disposes of some difficulties, but it depends upon so many conjectures and suppositions which in the case of Rome are certainties that I can see no valid reason for abandoning the position generally held that the Epistle was written during St Paul's Roman captivity.



#### IV. WAS THE EPISTLE WRITTEN EARLY OR LATE IN THE IMPRISONMENT ?

Assuming that the Epistle was written during the Apostle's Roman imprisonment we now proceed to enquire at what particular period in that imprisonment it was written, whether comparatively early or comparatively late. The question has given rise to a considerable difference of opinion, one school, of which Bishop Lightfoot was the most important representative, strongly advocating the earlier date, while more recent opinion as a whole is in favour of the letter having been written towards the close of the captivity. Lightfoot's conclusion was based mainly upon the question of the style and language of the Epistle, which unquestionably closely resemble those of the Epistle to the Romans and seem to bring it into more intimate contact with that Epistle than with the Colossian-Ephesian group which, according to the rival theory, must have come between our Epistle and the one other Epistle with which it is connected by stylistic and linguistic ties. He also attached great weight to the consideration that the advanced stage in the development of the Church exhibited in the Colossian and Ephesian Epistles, where the teaching concerning the Church reaches its loftiest heights, as well as the marked growth in the heresies combated in these Epistles demand that they should be placed as late as possible in this particular period. It has, however, already been pointed out that the argument founded upon similarity of style and language between certain Epistles as evidence of a close connection between them is now beginning to lose the force it formerly possessed, and the attempt to form an accurate chronological table of the Pauline letters on this particular basis is now frankly abandoned by most scholars. The language, style, and content of each Epistle are determined partly by the Apostle's peculiar mood at the time and partly by the conditions governing the life of the Church in question. Some remarks of Ramsay's in this particular connection are very apposite. "The tone of Colossians and Ephesians is determined by the circumstances of the Church addressed. The great Churches of Asia are on the highway of the world which traversed the Lycos valley, and in them development took place with great rapidity. The Macedonians were a simple minded people, living away from

the great movements of thought. It was not in St Paul's way to send to the Philippians an elaborate treatise against a subtle speculative theory which had never affected that Church" (*St Paul the Traveller*, p. 359). The point at issue must, therefore, be decided on other grounds than those of style, language, and content.

The data which help us in arriving at a conclusion are the following:

(a) Some considerable time must be allowed for the communications between St Paul and the Philippians. The Epistle seems to demand at least four separate journeys between Rome and Philippi.

1. To bring the news of St Paul's arrival at Rome to the Philippians.

2. To bring Epaphroditus to Rome.

3. To convey an intimation of the illness of Epaphroditus to the Philippians.

4. To bring back to Rome the expression of the regret of the Philippians at hearing of this illness.

(b) When the Epistle was written St Paul's companions, Luke and Aristarchus, who were with him when he arrived in Rome and were also in his company when the Epistle to the Colossians was written, were certainly not with him, for the language of ii. 20-21 is inexplicable if Luke was still at hand. We infer, therefore, that these two remained with the Apostle at Rome for some time, were still there when he wrote to the Colossians, but that when he came to write to the Philippians they had been despatched on some particular mission and that the Apostle was lonely in their absence.

(c) The picture of the Church of Rome given in the Epistle seems to imply a stage of considerable progress which would be difficult to achieve in a few months' time. Upon the Church itself the Apostle's presence has had the effect of a strong stimulant, and the impression we derive from the letter is that of a process which is not merely the result of the novelty caused by his arrival in Rome, but rather of a quickening of life and a renewal of activity which have manifested themselves for a substantial period.

Nor is the Apostle's influence or interest in his case confined to purely Christian circles. They have extended to the Praetorian Guard, and the Roman public generally is much exercised thereby. These are considerations, all of which point to a somewhat late period in the imprisonment.

(d) But the most important reason for placing the letter towards the very close of the captivity and a decisive one is the fact that it definitely implies that St Paul's trial was near at hand, if not indeed that some of the preliminary stages of the process had already taken place. The Apostle is looking forward to a speedy decision of his case and making plans for the future, if the decision is favourable. Now that the trial was postponed until towards the very end of the two years mentioned in Acts xxviii. 31 is quite clear from St Luke's language, and it is somewhere at this point that we must place the writing of our Epistle. But when we have got so far we find ourselves faced with a remarkable cleavage among those who advocate a late as against an early part of the imprisonment. Most scholars maintain that when St Paul wrote to the Philippians he was still occupying his "hired dwelling" (Acts xxviii. 30) but that the "two whole years" had all but lapsed. A few authorities, however, and more especially Zahn, contend that he had been removed from his own dwelling and that his condition of comparative freedom had come to an end with the approach of his trial. The references to the "Praetorium" and the "household of Caesar" show, we are told, that he was now in the prison which formed part of the Praetorian barracks and in close connection with the Christians in the palace of Caesar, which was in the neighbourhood of the prison. It is also contended that the Epistle gives an impression that the Apostle was no longer in a position to preach the Gospel freely as had been the case during the first two years of his imprisonment and that other Christian workers in Rome had taken advantage of his enforced silence to further their own propaganda. It is difficult of course to dogmatise concerning impressions, but a close study of the Epistle does not lead me to regard it as the work of a writer whose freedom was hampered to any substantial extent. It is hard to conceive how a more rigorous imprisonment, with the consequent isolation of the Apostle from the Christian brotherhood in Rome, could have conduced to the greater progress of the Gospel, or how a period of grave tension such as would be caused by the application of harsh measures to his own person could have made the Roman Christians as a whole more eager or more confident in the preaching of Christ. The Apostle speaks as one who is still in close touch with the Roman Church and all that concerns it, who is free to send and receive messengers and letters, and as one whose influence is yet at its height, although he may have forebodings that a change in that

respect is not far distant. The fateful decision is close at hand, it may mean life or it may mean death, but no radical change has yet taken place, and he is still in his "own hired dwelling receiving all that went in unto him and preaching the kingdom of God...with all boldness".

## V. THE AUTHENTICITY AND INTEGRITY OF THE EPISTLE.

### 1. *The authenticity of the Epistle.*

Rational criticism has very little to urge against the authenticity of our Epistle, and with the exception of the Dutch school, represented by Van Manen, there are few scholars in the present day who are not prepared to accept it as a genuine Pauline product. Various attempts have been made since the days of Baur to deny its genuineness and to assign its authorship to a later writer. These attempts are generally based on the alleged differences between our Epistle and that group of letters which are universally accepted as Pauline. Its Christology, the doctrine of justification, and the view of the law found in it are specially singled out as being inconsistent with the Apostle's unquestionable teaching on these points. Other features which are alleged to be un-Pauline are the mild attitude towards the Judaisers in i. 14 ff., the self-glorying and lack of humility in iii. 6, which are said to be quite unworthy of St Paul, and the uncertainty concerning the resurrection in iii. 11. It is also contended that the reference to "bishops and deacons" in i. 1 points to a later stage of development of the Christian ministry than was possible during the lifetime of St Paul and that the Epistle, therefore, belongs to post-Apostolic days. Very little weight is attached to these objections by the best authorities, and a great German writer like Schürer speaks of the criticisms of Holsten, who is the most acute and the most painstaking of those who refuse to accept the genuineness of the Epistle, as more like "slips of the pen than real arguments". The whole of this type of criticism is in reality based upon a narrow and wrong-headed view of St Paul and his writings. It is taken for granted that the four letters, viz. those to the Corinthians, Romans, and Galatians, present us with a picture of the writer which is complete in every detail, and the Paul of these letters is standardised and stereotyped so that anything that deviates in the slightest degree from this artificial standard



is forthwith condemned as un-Pauline. This is to make of St Paul, who was surely the most versatile and mobile of men, a mere machine, a creature of habit and routine, who must always speak with the same voice, act with unfailing regularity, and write in the same terms. That this is an entirely wrong view to take of the Apostle's personality and character is amply proved by the very letters which are set up as a standard of Pauline thought and action. The presence of the "eulogy of love" in the midst of the fierce polemics of 1 Corinthians, his love for his own unregenerate unbelieving nation manifested in Romans, and the remarkable capacity he displays for considering a question from manifold points of view prepare us to receive as Pauline letters which set forth new thoughts and ideas and testify to many a surprising mood and change of temperament. Criticism based on the mere differences from a standard constructed on purely artificial grounds has, therefore, no validity. It is also impossible to conceive what motive a later writer could have in publishing such a letter in St Paul's name, or what object could be served by such a procedure. The writer has evidently no axe of his own to grind because there are no questions of doctrinal or ecclesiastical importance discussed or decided, and the letter is so completely governed by the personal element that any explanation of its origin save its true one, that it was written by the Apostle himself, is hard to find. "The forger who according to Van Manen lived in Syria or Asia Minor in the second century and wrote an 'edifying composition' with a conscious effort to reproduce the Pauline manner must have been an astonishing literary artist, with a depth of insight and delicacy of feeling almost without a parallel". We may, therefore, decide without hesitation on *internal grounds only* that the Epistle is a genuine Pauline document.

The *external evidence* is equally conclusive.

Traces of its thought and language are found as early as the letter of Clement of Rome, who not only reproduces the idea expressed in ii. 4, but also makes use of the exact phrase "lowliness of mind". St Ignatius has several echoes of the contents of the Epistle as such expressions as "poured out as a libation to God" (cf. Phil. ii. 17), "Do nothing in a spirit of factiousness" "nor yet for vain glory" (cf. Phil. ii. 3), "I endure all things seeing that He Himself enableth me" (cf. Phil. iv. 13) show.

St Polycarp's testimony to his acquaintance with the Epistle is

still more explicit. He speaks of "enemies of the cross of Christ" (cf. Phil. iii. 19), and seems to be reproducing the very words of our letter in such phrases as "I rejoiced greatly in the Lord" and "Unto whom all things were made subject that are in heaven and in earth" (cf. Phil. iv. 10; ii. 10). There is also a definite allusion in his own letter to the Philippians to St Paul's correspondence with that Church.

The evidence of the "Letters of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons" written about 177 A.D. is very significant, for in these emphasis is laid on the humility of Christ and the very words of Phil. ii. 6 are quoted as illustrating this virtue.

The testimony of heretical writers is also to the same effect. It was known to the Sethiani, who quoted Phil. ii. 6-7 in support of their own doctrines, and was used by the Valentinian, Cassianus. It was also included in a mutilated form in Marcion's "Apostolicon".

Towards the end of the second century it was in general use among Catholic writers such as Irenaeus, who explicitly refers to it as "St Paul's Epistle to the Philippians", Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria, and was included among the letters of St Paul in the Canon of Muratori.

## 2. *The integrity of the Epistle.*

While criticism as a whole is in favour of accepting our Epistle as Pauline it is by no means so unanimous on the subject of its integrity. It will, therefore, be necessary to enter upon a somewhat full discussion of the question whether we have in the Epistle to the Philippians a simple unit or a compilation of two or more Pauline fragments. The main reasons for suggesting that the Epistle is a collection of letters or fragments of letters are the following:

(a) The real basis of the disjunctive theory is undoubtedly the unexpected change of tone in iii. 2. The transition is so abrupt and the subject introduced at this point is so entirely different in spirit and character from the Epistle as a whole that many scholars are constrained to explain the change as being due to the interpolation of another letter at this point.

(b) It is also alleged that there is in the Epistle itself evidence to show that more than one letter had been addressed by St Paul to

the Philippian Church. The fact that he had been the recipient of assistance from this Church on two previous occasions at least (cf. iv. 16) would necessitate one or two letters of acknowledgment besides our present Epistle, and the expression "to write the same things to you" (iii. 1) cannot well be explained by the contents of our letter and must, therefore, refer to previous correspondence between the Apostle and the Philippians.

(c) There is also a certain amount of external evidence in favour of the supposition that St Paul wrote more than one letter to the Philippians. St Polycarp in his own letter to the same community, written in the second century, makes use of the plural "letters" with reference to the Apostle's correspondence with them.

(d) The phrase "finally" with which chapter iii. opens indicates an intention on St Paul's part to close the letter at this point and is entirely out of place if it was followed by two more chapters, forming at least half the letter, as is the case in our present Epistle.

(e) It is argued that in the Epistle as it stands the acknowledgment of the Philippians' bounty is far too casual. It comes too near the end of the letter and is apparently nothing more than an afterthought, as the Apostle has been on the point of concluding the letter with the usual benediction before the acknowledgment is reached.

The majority of those who allege that the Epistle is a collection of letters rather than one single letter divide it into two separate documents. They all agree in placing the beginning of the second document at iii. 1 b or iii. 2, but there is a striking variety of opinion as to the precise point where that document ends. Some divide the Epistle into two straightforward documents (Baur and Hausrath), each consisting of two chapters, while others interpolate a letter consisting of chapters iii. and iv. 1-19 in the middle of an original letter which included chapters i. and ii., and iv. 20-23. Kirsopp Lake, who also favours the interpolation theory, would close the second letter at iv. 3 on the plea that the exhortation to "rejoice" found in iii. 1 is repeated and extended in iv. 4, whereby an admirable sequence is formed. A more intricate scheme of partition is set forth by the Rev. J. E. Symes (*Interpreter*, Jan. 1914) who contends that St Paul must have written five letters to the Church of Philippi and that three of them, or fragments of three, are included in our present Epistle in the following order: (1) Phil. iii. 2-iv. 9; (2) Phil.

iv. 10-20; (3) Phil. i. 1-iii. 1, iv. 21-23. According to this theory the canonical Epistle to the Philippians is the work of a scribe who combined these three Pauline documents which had been preserved by the Philippian Church and formed them into one single letter.

A less drastic view than those mentioned above is that of Ewald and others who suggest that we have in our Epistle not a collection of separate letters written and sent by St Paul at various times, but one document consisting of two sections, one of which was written considerably later than the other.

Let us now examine these arguments.

1. That St Paul addressed more than one letter to the Philippian Church, which he held in such high esteem and with which he was associated in the most intimate fellowship, is more than probable. To mention no other reason, the simple acknowledgment of the many gifts he had received at the hands of the Philippian Christians would necessitate a fairly wide correspondence. The Apostle was essentially a Christian gentleman, and we cannot conceive him receiving bounty which was not promptly and gratefully acknowledged. But this does not imply that these letters or fragments of them are necessarily included in our Epistle. It is very much more reasonable to assume that these have perished with the great majority of letters that the Apostle must have written in the course of a long and active missionary career. There is, therefore, no difficulty in accepting the suggestion that he wrote more than one letter to the Philippians, and it is quite possible that the expression "to write the same things to you" refers to some earlier written communications. If it could be proved that St Polycarp by his use of the plural "letters" with reference to St Paul's correspondence with the Philippians was speaking of what he knew to be in existence *at the time when he was writing* it would considerably strengthen the hands of those who advocate the "partition" theory. It is not likely that a letter of the Apostle's which had been preserved well into the second century would have been allowed to disappear, and the only alternative would be to assume that our Epistle is composed of more than one original letter. It is by no means improbable, however, that St Polycarp is thinking here of the letters to the neighbouring Church of Thessalonica as well as that to Philippi. His language in his own letter to the Philippians suggests that 2 Thessalonians was closely associated in his mind with the Epistle to Philippi. We also know that Tertullian



quotes our Epistle as if it had been addressed to the Thessalonian Church, and it is, therefore, possible that in the second century St Paul's letters to the Macedonian Churches came to be regarded as a definite group, closely connected with each other. This would explain St Polycarp's use of the plural as including not only the one Epistle to the Philippians, but the group as a whole (Moffatt, *Int. Lit. N.T.* p. 174). I would suggest, however, that St Polycarp is using the term loosely. He knew that more than one letter had been written to Philippi by St Paul, but we need not assume that there were any of these in existence when he was writing beyond the one known to us. Further, it is difficult to understand how, if there had been several letters to the Church of Philippi extant during the later years of St Polycarp, we should find no trace of them in Marcion, who was practically his contemporary.

2. A study of the Pauline Epistles shows clearly that the Greek phrase which in our version is translated "finally" does not necessarily point to the imminent closing of the letter. In 1 Thess. iv. 1 and 2 Thess. iii. 1, e.g. the expression is found at a considerable distance from the concluding verses of the respective Epistles. In the "Koiné" (the vernacular Greek of the period) the expression does little more than mark the transition from one subject to another, and in modern Greek it has become a mere substitute for "therefore". Its presence, then, in iii. 1 is no evidence that St Paul intended to conclude his letter at this point.

3. Much stress is laid by some writers, and especially by Mr Symes, on the fact that the acknowledgment of the gift of the Philippians, which is clearly the practical motive of the letter, is relegated to its close and must, therefore, have formed part of another letter. A very superficial examination of the Apostle's method as illustrated by his other Epistles completely disposes of this difficulty. The main practical purpose of 1 Corinthians was unquestionably the organisation of the "collection for the saints", and yet there is not the slightest allusion to it until the very last chapter is reached. Again, the practical motive of the Epistle to the Romans is to prepare the Roman Church for a visit from St Paul in the near future. It is true that much is said in the first chapter concerning his desire to see Rome, but the actual details of the visit, the how and the when, are reserved until the 15th chapter and are not mentioned until the Epistle has apparently closed with the benediction in xv. 13. In this respect our Epistle differs in no wise from what seems

to have been the general practice of the Apostle. There is probably a reference to the generosity of the Philippians in i. 5 in the phrase "your fellowship", but the purely personal and practical details are relegated to the close of the letter after the more definitely hortatory and doctrinal issues have been adequately dealt with.

4. The real foundation for the supposition that we have more than one document embodied in our Epistle is, as we have already mentioned, the transition from the first to the second verse of chapter iii. The change from "Rejoice in the Lord" of the one verse to "Beware of the dogs" of the other is undoubtedly very abrupt and disconcerting, but unless the evidence for the intrusion of an alien document is overwhelming it is preferable to look for an explanation of the change in another direction. Some of St Paul's other letters are not altogether free from similar phenomena. The presence of the "eulogy of love" (1 Cor. xiii.) in the very midst of a letter which affords the strongest manifestation of the stern and disciplinary sides of St Paul's character is a case in point. The truth is that both 1 Corinthians and this Epistle testify to the fulness and many-sidedness of the Apostle's personality. In the case of the Corinthian letter we see the womanly tenderness and love of the Apostle breaking through his indignation and reproaches like a gleam of bright sunshine piercing through the gloom of a stormy sky, while the contrary process is revealed in our Epistle. There the tenderness and affection with which his heart is overflowing are for the moment overborne by his righteous indignation at some special manifestation of the animosity of his enemies. This outburst is generally regarded as directed against the Judaisers who in the earlier years of his missionary activity had made him the object of their bitter malevolence. This solution is, however, fraught with many difficulties, and I am inclined to look in another direction for the particular enemy attacked here. The view adopted in this Commentary is that our Epistle was written towards the very close of the Roman imprisonment and after some of the preliminary proceedings of the trial had already taken place. Is it not possible that while St Paul was actually writing the Epistle there may have arrived in Rome the deputation of Jewish witnesses from the Council at Jerusalem who proceeded to hound him to his death with that relentless hatred which had so nearly proved his doom in Jerusalem and Caesarea? So while the Epistle was still in an unfinished state the Apostle found his hopes of release seriously jeopardised by the

arrival of these hostile witnesses and gives vent to his indignation in the words which have caused so much difficulty. The abrupt change in the tone of the Epistle is all the more natural and intelligible if we bear in mind the fact that the letter was dictated and was, therefore, a speech rather than a letter pure and simple. We can picture to ourselves the Apostle being interrupted in the very act of dictating by the news of the arrival of his relentless enemies, and then breaking out into the fierce invective which was so faithfully recorded by his amanuensis. The mood lasted but a short while, and before the end of the chapter is reached he is again on the serene heights, and in the remainder of the letter the original spirit is recovered, the joyous and confident tone being maintained to the very end. One of the strongest arguments against the "interpolation" theory is that while the break at the beginning of the third chapter is clear enough it is impossible to point out definitely where the alleged interpolation ends. The blend is so complete and the sequence so natural as to make the supposition of an interpolation at this point very difficult to accept.

I do not consider, then, that the arguments taken singly or cumulatively are of sufficient weight to justify us in destroying the unity of what is in some respects the most beautiful of all the Pauline Epistles. Further, a close study of the Epistle itself seems to me to prove incontestably that we have here no mere collection of Pauline fragments but a true Apostolic letter which, in spite of a momentary outburst of indignation, breathes throughout the same spirit and is from beginning to end concerned with the same subject. Its contents and character may be described in one comprehensive phrase, "the Epistle of Humility". From first to last it is the thought of humility, Christian humility which has its issue in Christian unity, that underlies every utterance in it. There are two expressions which mark the very spirit of the letter, "lowliness of mind" and "be of one mind" with its variant "be of the same mind". After the first chapter, in which the Apostle discourses on his own fortunes and the progress of Christianity in Rome, he comes to the main subject in the second chapter where it is emphasised in verse after verse. The great Christological passage in ii. 5-11 is the very heart of the Epistle, and there humility is the central thought and the humility of Christ is set up as the great pattern. How then does the so-called interpolated section stand with respect to this Christian grace of humility which is the leading thought of the Epistle as a whole?

Nothing further removed from Christian humility could be imagined than the opening verses of chapter iii. with their fierce attacks upon the Jews and the Apostle's proud boast of his Hebrew descent and of his righteousness in the sight of the law. And yet the chapter as a whole offers a most striking parallel to the second chapter, and the parallelism is not confined to the general idea but is extended also to details. In the previous chapter the Apostle has given us an eloquent and moving statement concerning our Lord's "self-emptying" and in this chapter he repeats the process, but the "self-emptying" is now his own and not his Master's. And more, the stages in his own spiritual character correspond exactly, although naturally on a different plane, with those he has sketched in his conception of the Master's course from glory to glory. He too has had his period of privilege and honour, based it is true on wrong principles, but real enough at the time when he was proud of his Hebrew descent and of his Pharisaic righteousness. He too has passed through a period of "humiliation and self-emptying" when he willingly abandoned all that formerly seemed to give existence any value that he might gain the only prize that he knew now to be worth attaining. For him too, by the grace and the power of God in Christ Jesus, a period of glory was to dawn, when he attained "unto the resurrection from the dead". And all through this touching autobiographical passage there shines the most winning humility, and the dominating *motif* of the Epistle comes out clearly in such passages as "Not that I have already obtained or am already made perfect", "I count not myself yet to have apprehended". The whole passage closes with an exhortation to the Philippians to cherish the same humble but confident disposition (iii. 15), and the keynote is once again sounded in the phrase "be thus minded" and is repeated in the following verse "if ye be otherwise minded". Further in the last verse of the chapter we have an echo of the same leading thought where St Paul speaks of "the body of our humiliation", and it is most significant that when he describes the progress of the body from its phase of weakness and decay to the glory which awaits it he should reproduce in the words μετασχηματίζω and σύμμορφος the fundamental terms that he uses with reference to our Lord's own progress from humiliation to glory in ii. 5-11, viz. σχῆμα and μορφή. Finally in iv. 2 which still belongs to the alleged foreign document the phrase "be ye of the same mind" recurs. The literary evidence is, therefore, overwhelmingly in favour



of the integrity of our Epistle. Not only is the spirit of the remainder of the letter discernible in the so-called interpolated section but the very phrases which constitute the keynote of the letter as a whole occur repeatedly in it, giving to the whole document a unity and self-consistency which the arguments we have adduced are powerless to destroy.

## VI. THE OCCASION AND PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE.

One of the most interesting characteristics of primitive Christianity was the development of the use of letters as a medium of communication between individuals and Churches. The use of letters for religious purposes was not altogether a novelty, because we find instances of a similar usage in earlier times. Jeremiah writes a letter to the captives who had been carried away to Babylon which is essentially religious in character (Jer. xxix.). In the Apocrypha also the Book of Baruch is composed of two books of a hortatory character in the form of letters, one from Baruch himself written from Babylon to the remnant of the Jews in Jerusalem (chaps. i.-v.), and the other from Jeremiah at Jerusalem to the exiles in Babylon. But what Ramsay says with regard to the Christian use of the letter is fully justified: "The Christians developed the letter into new forms, applied it to new uses, and placed it upon a much higher plane than it had ever before stood upon. In their hands communication by letter became one of the most, if not the most, important agencies for consolidating and maintaining the sense of unity among the scattered branches of the universal Church... The unity of the separate and equal congregations was kept alive by travel and correspondence" (*H. D. B.* Vol. v. "Roads and Travel"). St Paul took a leading part in this development and he may well be called the creator of the Christian letter.

The force of circumstances had doubtless something to do with the important position assumed by the letter in the Pauline world. The wide extent of his missionary activities would alone necessitate some agent of communication between himself and the many communities he had founded, but he was the first to see that the contents of a letter need not be confined to the mere discussion of matters of practical interest and that it can be made the channel of teaching, reproof, comfort, exhortation, and love in a way which has been imitated by all great Christian letter-writers in subsequent ages.

The recent discovery of *papyrus* documents in Egypt in considerable numbers enables us to form a very clear idea of the exact form and appearance of the Pauline letters. Taking the ordinary *papyrus* letter as a specimen we may infer that the Apostle wrote on a *papyrus* sheet 5 to 5½ inches wide by 9 to 11 inches long. One of these sheets would contain a short note like the Epistle to Philemon, but when more than one sheet was required they were joined together at the ends and formed into a long roll. The sheet was covered on one side only with writing arranged in two parallel columns. We know from the Apostle's own statement that he generally dictated his letters and was content himself with inscribing the final salutation in his own writing. Our Epistle was probably actually written by Timothy. (See note on i. 1.) The custom of employing an amanuensis is illustrated by many of the *papyrus* letters in which the signature is written in a different hand from that of the main document. But the parallels between the Pauline letters and the normal correspondence of the period are not confined to matters of shape and appearance, for the style, plan, and some of the most characteristic expressions of St Paul's letters are imitations of those found in the ordinary Greek letter. A reference to the many *papyrus* letters printed in Deissmann's *Light from the Ancient East* or to the few contained in Milligan's most interesting note on "St Paul as a letter writer" (*Commentary on 1 and 2 Thess.*, pp. 121 ff.) shows how far the structure of a Pauline letter with its address, greeting, thanksgiving, special contents, personal salutation, and autograph was based on the plan of the current letter of the period.

The conveyance of letters from one place to another was at this time a matter of some difficulty. There was certainly an Imperial postal system, but its use was strictly confined to Imperial and official correspondence. Travelling, however, both for business and pleasure was popular, safe, and easy, and Ramsay tells us that at no period in the history of the world previous to the introduction of steamers and railways was communication so simple and so certain as in the days of the Empire. The facilities offered by the journeys of friends and acquaintances or by those of special messengers were largely utilised for the conveyance of letters in New Testament times, and it would seem that most of St Paul's letters were conveyed to their destinations by some such means as these. It was an opportunity of this character that explains the sending of our Epistle. Some months before the Apostle had received from the Philippian

Church by the hands of Epaphroditus a gift of money. The latter was, however, not content with being the mere almoner of the Church of Philippi, but had on his arrival in Rome devoted himself so completely to the service of St Paul that he fell victim to a serious illness which at one time threatened to prove fatal. He, however, eventually recovered and was now on the point of returning to his native city. St Paul decided to take advantage of his return to send a letter to the Church which had so generously ministered to his needs, primarily to thank them for their kindly thought towards himself, and at the same time to reassure them concerning his own personal situation, which seems to have caused them some anxiety. This letter was our Epistle to the Philippians. It is a moot point whether our Epistle betrays any traces of being a reply to a letter from the Philippians as well as an acknowledgment of the gift received from them. It is quite in accordance with the fitness of things that the monetary contribution should have been accompanied by a letter in which the Philippians expressed their unswerving affection for St Paul as well as their apprehensions for his future in view of his coming trial. It is now generally recognised that some passages in the Pauline Epistles are simply quotations from letters received by the Apostle which he has incorporated in his reply. A well-known instance of this is the passage in 1 Cor. viii. 1-9 where he is dealing with the difficult question of "meat sacrificed to idols", and where, in verse after verse, he seems to take up the position assumed by those who wrote to him asking him for guidance on this particular matter. (See Lock, in *Expositor*, Series V, vol. vi. pp. 65 ff.) Some scholars maintain that this is true to an appreciable extent of our Epistle and that here and there phrases are found which betray the very words employed by the Philippians in their letter to the Apostle. Thus in i. 12 we seem to have a direct reply to an enquiry as to the condition of his own affairs: in i. 7 the rendering adopted by some, "because you have me in your hearts" sounds like a direct quotation of an expression of deep affection on the part of the Philippians, and again in iv. 10 an apology from the Philippians for the fact that they had not been able to come to his assistance before seems to be repeated. (See Rendel Harris, *Expositor*, Series V, vol. 8, p. 409.) The situation as described in the Epistle seems also to demand a further communication from the Philippians, because in ii. 26 the Apostle refers to the fact that they had received information of Epaphroditus' illness and that he himself was aware that this

had caused them considerable anxiety. The question, therefore, arises whether the traces of a communication from the Philippians discernible in our Epistle belong to a letter which accompanied the gift or to a later letter sent when they had heard of the illness of Epaphroditus and the imminent approach of St Paul's trial. Zahn (*Int. to N. T.* Vol. i. pp. 525 ff.) has built up quite an imposing theory around this point. He maintains that the Apostle must have sent an acknowledgment of the Philippians' bounty soon after its receipt, and that in this letter he informed them of the illness of Epaphroditus and added some warnings like those contained in the third chapter of our present Epistle, which would explain the reference in iii. 1, "To write the same things to you". Our Epistle would in this case be a reply not to any communication, oral or written, conveyed by Epaphroditus but to a later letter written to acknowledge the receipt of St Paul's thanks. Zahn also tells us that our Epistle enables us to have a tolerably definite idea of what that letter contained. In i. 3 where, according to the best supported reading (in Zahn's view), St Paul emphasises the point that *he* on his part thanks the Lord Jesus for "their fellowship in furtherance of the Gospel" he sees a reference to an expression of dissatisfaction on the part of the Philippians as to the extent of their support of the Apostle and of his work. The tone of the Apostle's language in ii. 17, 25, 30, and more especially in iv. 10-20 with reference to the mission of Epaphroditus and the gift of which he was the bearer are only intelligible, according to Zahn, on the supposition that the Church of Philippi had very strongly expressed the feeling that it had been slow and ungenerous in coming to his assistance. To the Philippians the Apostle's acknowledgment of their bounty had seemed cold and lacking in gratitude, and in our Epistle, therefore, he sets their mind at rest on this particular point. But this was not the only question concerning which they seemed to have formed a wrong impression for, according to our critic, they had gone seriously astray in their view of the Apostle's own situation. They had described themselves as being in a state of grave anxiety as to the result of his trial and full of fear that not only the Apostle's own life but the whole cause of the Gospel was in extreme peril. It is this impression which the Apostle seeks to remove in i. 12-19 when he tells them that his trial, far from having the effect they anticipated, had had the precisely opposite effect, and that both his own situation and the prospects of the Gospel had been considerably enhanced



thereby. The purpose of our Epistle then, according to Zahn, was to dispel the depression among the Philippian Christians caused by their anxiety concerning the Apostle's welfare and the future of the Church in Rome and to disabuse their minds of the idea that their contribution was deficient either in amount or in real warmth of spirit and affection. It is this that explains the repeated exhortation to rejoice and the frequent and cordial recognition of their generosity, as well as the expression of satisfaction and pride in the Church, the glowing picture of the progress of the Gospel in Rome, and the favourable description of his own situation. There is doubtless much that is true and suggestive in the situation as delineated by Zahn, and there is no insuperable difficulty in accepting the supposition that St Paul received two written communications from Philippi, one by the hand of Epaphroditus and another later on telling him of their great anxiety concerning the latter's illness and expressing their sorrow and affectionate concern because of the Apostle's coming trial and its possible issue. There is no sound reason, however, for assuming more than one written communication from Philippi to the Apostle, which would be the letter accompanying the gift. Any later message that reached Rome from Philippi would probably be a verbal one, or perhaps only a casual hint by a Christian traveller who had passed through Philippi on his way westwards to Rome. Our Epistle was probably the first written acknowledgment of the Philippians' generosity, although it is quite possible that the same person who enlightened the latter as to the illness of Epaphroditus may also have conveyed a verbal message of thanks from the Apostle. There is in the Epistle, however, no trace of the complex situation or atmosphere of suspicion and misunderstanding which Zahn describes. Not one single phrase in the Epistle in this connection requires the interpretation put upon it by him, and it is only by overpressing certain simple statements and by twisting others that any such view is made possible. The whole tone of the letter is in direct opposition to any such situation. It is permeated through and through by the spirit of absolute trust and confidence, and there is not a word from beginning to end which countenances the allegation that the Philippians were grieved at the Apostle's lack of proper gratitude or that they had *gravely* misunderstood his position at Rome and needed reproof and correction on that point. The real situation is perfectly clear and simple. The Apostle had received from the Philippian Church, the dearest

to his heart of all the Churches that he had founded, a generous gift, probably accompanied by a letter expressing their warmest affection for him and their regret that circumstances had prevented them from ministering earlier to his wants. With this they would couple an enquiry as to his personal welfare and the progress of the Church in Rome, more especially in view of his coming trial which they had heard was to take place shortly and naturally caused them some anxiety. The Apostle was prevented by some causes unknown to us from sending an immediate written acknowledgment of the receipt of their bounty, but takes advantage of the chance journey of a Christian brother from Rome to Philippi to send a verbal message intimating that the gift and letter had been gratefully received, but that Epaphroditus, their messenger and bearer of their bounty, was seriously ill. When a sufficient period had elapsed to allow of the arrival of a later message from Philippi acquainting the Apostle with the grief and anxiety occasioned by the news concerning Epaphroditus he finds himself in a position to be able to write to them, thanking them for their gift, setting their minds at ease with regard to his own personal welfare and the progress of the Gospel in Rome, and comforting them with regard to Epaphroditus who is now well enough to undertake the journey homewards and to be the bearer of the letter itself. These three points may be said to constitute the primary purpose of the letter, although other matters are touched upon concerning which more will be said in the section which treats of the Philippian Church and its affairs.

## VII. THE HISTORICAL VALUE OF THE EPISTLE.

The Epistle to the Philippians is of unusual value as a contribution to the history of the Apostolic Church, because it not only throws considerable light upon the condition of the primitive Christian community at Philippi, but is also our one source of information concerning a somewhat obscure period in the life of St Paul and in the history of the great Church of Rome. The latter feature is, indeed, the more important of the two.

### 1. *St Paul at Rome.*

St Luke, in the Acts, traces the course of St Paul's missionary career up to the point where it reaches its climax in the arrival of the Apostle in Rome. The details of the arrival itself and the events

of the days which immediately followed it are described with much fulness, but the book comes to an abrupt close with the intimation that St Paul "abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus with all boldness, none forbidding him" (Acts xxviii. 30, 31). For anything like a detailed account of the events of this period of two years and of the character of the relationships that existed between the Apostle and the Christian community in Rome on the one hand, and between him and the Imperial power on the other, we are almost entirely indebted to our Epistle. It is true that several others of the Pauline Epistles were written from the Roman prison, but beyond a mere catalogue of the names of his most intimate companions at the time in Col. iv. 7-14 and Philemon 23, 24, and a general reference to his imprisonment in Ephes. iii. 1, iv. 1 and Philemon 9, they have nothing to tell us of the Apostle's personal condition or of Rome, whether pagan or Christian.

In our Epistle, however, there are several passages which enable us to realise to some extent the effect of the presence of the great Apostle in the Imperial capital and his influence upon the fortunes of Christianity in that city. The picture that the Epistle gives us is of St Paul in Rome after nearly two years' confinement in his own lodgings, where he was still free to receive all who came to him and to exercise his Apostolic mission under somewhat restricted conditions. The mere arrival of St Paul, the foremost representative of Christianity, in Rome as a prisoner who had appealed to the Imperial tribunal was in itself an event of first rate importance in the history of the Church. For the first time organised Christianity and the Empire stood face to face in the capital itself, and St Paul's appeal was a definite challenge to the Empire to enter upon that conflict which was to deluge the world with the blood of the saints and less than three centuries afterwards was to issue in the complete victory of the Church. There was existing in Rome before St Paul's arrival a considerable Christian community, concerning whose origin we have no positive evidence, but which in the opinion of some modern scholars had already enjoyed the privilege of St Peter's presence and leadership. (See especially Edmundson's *Bampton Lectures*, 1913.) It had, however, been content to lead its life quietly and had apparently not attracted the special attention of pagan or Jewish Rome. With St Paul's arrival upon the scene

all this was changed. He was already a notable personage in the provinces of the Empire, he had come into close contact with Roman provincial Governors and high Imperial officials, and had drawn upon himself the implacable hostility of the Jews throughout the world. Christianity in the person of St Paul in Rome, therefore, became a factor to be reckoned with, and the results which followed the change in the situation are outlined for us with some definiteness in our Epistle. St Paul had already passed through some of the preliminary stages of his trial, and it would seem that this had had the effect of concentrating attention upon him and the cause he represented. In our letter he points out how his presence as a prisoner in Rome and the proceedings of his trial had affected his relationships with those who were without as well as those within the Church. In pagan Rome he mentions two definite spheres in which his own personal situation and the Gospel that he preached had become matters of interest, viz. the Imperial household and the Praetorian Guard, and he suggests that this was true to some extent of the city as a whole (i. 13). His success among the dependants of Caesar's household is probably to be explained by the fact that his dwelling was in the near vicinity of the Imperial palace, and when we remember that he was guarded continuously by a succession of soldiers of the Imperial Guard we can understand how the story and something of the personal influence of this prisoner had permeated through the whole of that body. If we may assume that Romans xvi was written before his journey to Rome, it would follow that Christianity had found its way into the Imperial household before the arrival of St Paul in Rome, for among the Christians to whom he sends greetings in that chapter are members of the households of Aristobulus, a son of Herod the Great, and of Narcissus, a freedman and favourite of Claudius, both of which eventually passed into the possession of the Emperor. The Apostle was, therefore, building here on foundations laid by others. The tone of his language in reference to this aspect of his work is one of complete satisfaction and seems to imply that Christianity had made itself felt in these circles not merely as an object of curiosity, but that a substantial harvest in the shape of Christian converts had been gathered in.

When he comes to speak of his relationships with the Christian community in Rome as a whole and of the effect of his presence and trial upon it, his satisfaction and joy are not so complete, although he exhibits here a wonderful capacity for broadmindedness and



elimination of self (cf. i. 18 : iv. 5 τὸ ἐπιεικὲς). The Roman Church was evidently not a perfectly united and homogeneous body. In its early days Christianity in Rome was probably represented by various separate groups which met in different houses for the purposes of worship and fellowship, and it was the work of years to amalgamate these into one organised Christian body, and even as late as the date of our Epistle the work was not complete and there was still a considerable cleavage. The Church was now apparently preponderatingly Gentile in character, but with a strong admixture of the Jewish element which was particularly active and zealous. In tracing the effect upon Roman Christianity of his imprisonment and the early stages of his trial, and more especially of his courageous and free-spoken defence which had evidently produced a strong impression in the court, the Apostle explains that the Roman Church as a whole had been stimulated to renewed courage and zeal, but that all Roman Christians were not animated by the same motives. One section was devoted to him heart and soul and laboured in behalf of the Gospel in a manner that filled him with joy and gladness, but there was another section of the Church, and apparently an influential one, which displayed considerable activity as propagandists, but whose efforts did not commend themselves entirely to him. They preached "Christ of envy and strife" and proclaimed "Christ of faction, not sincerely, thinking to raise up affliction for me in my bonds" (i. 15, 17). What this particular section of Roman Christians was composed of and what was the precise method of its operations have been subjects of much discussion. That it consisted mainly, if not entirely, of Jews and that Jewish hostility towards the Apostle lay at the root of its attitude is, I think, beyond question. And yet they cannot have been Judaisers of the type that is familiar to us in the Epistle to the Galatians. It is impossible to imagine the Apostle employing language of the comparatively mild character that we find in this Epistle if it had reference to quasi-Christians who proclaimed a false Gospel. It is important to note that what is condemned in our Epistle is not the content of the Gospel preached, but the methods and motives of its preachers. The complaint uttered by the Apostle is mainly of a personal nature, and it is entirely opposed to his character to push his own person to the front if the objective truth of the Gospel of Christ is at stake. The real basis for the conduct which is made the subject of reproof was jealousy of the Apostle's presence in Rome and of his influence upon

the Church of Rome as a whole. That Church had had a fairly long and independent existence before he appeared on the scene, and if it had for some years enjoyed the presence of St Peter at its head it is not difficult to understand how a section might resent the position claimed by St Paul. The very fact that they were Jews would at the very outset prevent a too friendly attitude towards St Paul, and when his energies became absorbed by the events of his trial and his activities proportionately restricted the opportunity was too good to lose. They were now comparatively free to follow their own bent and to assert their independence of the Apostle's guidance, and, according to his own statement, they were not above carrying on their propaganda with the deliberate object of causing him pain and of making his want of freedom still harder to bear. The words with which this passage in the Epistle closes (i. 18) are a noble testimony to the Apostle's real breadth of mind and toleration and a notable instance of his power to forget himself when the cause of Christ was at stake. His opponents' method of preaching did not commend itself to him and their attitude towards himself was mean, ungenerous, and painful, and yet it was Christ that they preached and proclaimed and he, therefore, rejoiced, aye, and would rejoice.

The Apostle's language in ii. 20, 21 would seem to imply that when the Epistle was written he was separated from most of his intimate friends and companions, and the fact that only two of these are mentioned, viz. Timothy, who is associated with him in the address, and Epaphroditus, who was to be the bearer of the letter, points in the same direction. But we know from other letters written from Rome that there were several other brethren with him during some portion of his imprisonment. It is almost certain that Luke and Aristarchus were in his company when he arrived in Rome, and that they remained with him until after the Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon had been written, and these same Epistles show that Mark, Jesus Justus, Epaphras, Demas, and Tychicus had been added to their number (Col. iv. 10-14 : Philemon 23, 24). It is probable, then, that before our Epistle was written most, if not all, of these had left Rome on different missions assigned to them by St Paul. Tychicus we know to have been sent to the Churches of the Lycus valley (Col. iv. 7, 8) and it is more than likely that he was accompanied by Epaphras, who was closely connected with these Churches, and by Mark, who was at the time

contemplating a journey to that district (Col. iv. 10). The meaning of the reference in ii. 2, "For they all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ" is obscure, but it is difficult to believe that Luke, the beloved physician and St Paul's loyal companion in so many perils, could have been at his side when they were written. The tone of the passage speaks of one who is oppressed by loneliness and isolation: his best and most faithful friends are no longer by his side to comfort him, and those who are left, with the exception of Timothy, are not animated by the same devotion to himself and his principles; their motives are not so unselfish and disinterested, and the Apostle is for the moment saddened and discouraged.

If our interpretation of iii. 2 ff. be correct there would be a further reason for his temporary depression at the very time when the Epistle was being dictated. The hostility of the Jews in Rome, encouraged perhaps by the arrival of the Jewish witnesses from Jerusalem, had become active and intensified, and St Paul's prospects of release and freedom were receding into the distance in consequence. The separation from his friends that he loved and his isolation, together with his darkened prospects, proved a burden which was for the moment heavier than he could bear, but the courage of the Christian soldier triumphs and he soon becomes his own buoyant, confident self again. So the picture given to us in the Epistle of the Apostle's own situation and of the state of the Roman Church is on the whole painted in bright colours, but there are shadows on the canvas here and there. The trial as far as it has progressed has been generally favourable, but the hostility of the Jews is a grave danger, and the future is by no means clear. There is much zeal and activity on behalf of the Gospel in the Roman Church, but there are causes of disquiet and anxiety. His own influence is on the wane, and other methods and other principles than his threaten to become ascendant. He is sometimes lonely and depressed, he is not among his own children as would be the case at Philippi, and although he is surrounded by many friends they are not interested in the Church at large outside of Rome itself and they are absorbed in their own more immediate concerns. And yet the Apostle's unflinching hope and courage overcome all difficulties, and the Epistle throughout breathes the spirit of true Christian joy. Come what may, life or death, devotion or jealousy, the sweet company of faithful friends or the loneliness of isolation "I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice" (i. 18).

## 2. *The Church of Philippi.*

The history of the founding of the Church at Philippi as related in the Acts will have taught us to some extent what we might expect to learn of the condition of that Church at the time when our Epistle was written. Some twelve years had elapsed since the Gospel was first preached at Philippi, but there does not seem to have been any notable change in the situation, and the Church had developed along the lines which were characteristic of its earliest history, of which three are very marked.

1. *The affectionate relationship existing between the Apostle and his converts.* The narrative in the Acts lays emphasis upon the hospitable reception of the Christian missionaries, the generosity of Lydia, the widespread success of the Gospel and its effect upon different grades of society, and the manifest sympathy of the neophytes with the Apostle in his sufferings. Now all this and more is reflected in the picture of the Church of Philippi which is drawn in our Epistle. The letter itself is pre-eminently the most affectionate and joyous of all the Pauline Epistles. Bengel summarises its contents in the phrase "*Gaudeo, gaudete*". It is remarkably free from complaint and fault-finding and points definitely to the absence of any lack of loyalty to the Apostle himself on the part of the Philippian Church. The sympathy and generosity assume a practical form in the sending of a substantial gift of money towards the Apostle's needs in his Roman prison, and his high regard for the Church is displayed by his readiness to accept the gift, a privilege that he had denied to other Churches. That it was thoroughly loyal to St Paul is written large on the very surface of the Epistle; his authority is never called in question and there is no reflection cast upon his position as an Apostle. Reverence and an affectionate regard for the great Christian missionary who had called them from darkness into light were the sentiments which governed the Church. The mutual relations which existed between the Apostle and his converts were the ideal of what should exist between the shepherd and his flock. On the one side we find sympathy at a time of affliction, support in a period of want, loyalty, intense and sincere, towards the Apostle's person and office, a faithful following of his teaching and practice, and earnest prayer for his welfare, spiritual and material, and on the other an affectionate trust, deep gratitude, and a



heart-felt appreciation of all their efforts on his behalf and that of the Gospel, while these sentiments are cemented and sanctified by his never ceasing supplication to God through Christ Jesus for the spiritual progress of his beloved Philippian Church.

2. *The position of women in the Church of Philippi.* The "first-fruit" of the Gospel in Philippi was a woman, Lydia, the purple-seller of Thyatira and a "God-fearer" before her reception into the Christian Church. We are, therefore, not surprised to find that women continued to play a prominent part in the further history of the Philippian Church. It is not fanciful to attribute in some degree the affectionate relationship between St Paul and that Church to womanly interest and sympathy, and it is quite in accordance with what we know of woman's nature to see in the frequent efforts of the Church to minister to the Apostle's wants something of her influence and activity. At the same time women are prone to suffer from the defects of their qualities and their zeal and devotion are occasionally apt to lead to mutual jealousies and dissensions. This would seem to have been the case at Philippi, and one of the discordant notes in the Epistle is concerned with two women, Euodia and Syntyche, who had laboured praiseworthily in the building up of the Church. A report of this somewhat discreditable quarrel had reached the Apostle, and it called forth from him an earnest exhortation to these persons to settle their differences and to cease to trouble the Church. Generally speaking, however, the influence of the feminine element in Philippi was admirable and had unquestionably no little share in developing a faithful, loyal, affectionate, and Christ-like community in that city.

3. *The constituent elements of the Church of Philippi.* We have seen that Jews were comparatively few in Philippi, and what was true of the city as a whole would also seem to be applicable to the Christian portion of it. The Church of Philippi was unquestionably mainly Gentile in character, and it is to this that we must attribute much of what is characteristic of its development and ultimate history. Its unique relations with St Paul, its marked affection for him, its undeviating loyalty to his person and doctrine, and its comparative freedom from divisions and controversies were due in no slight measure to the absence from its midst of the disturbing Jewish element, which was always hostile to the Apostle. Another factor that perhaps points to the weakness of the Jewish section is the acceptance on the part of St Paul of frequent financial

contributions from this particular Church. It is doubtful whether any such assistance would ever have been offered had the Jewish party been strong at Philippi, but it is tolerably certain that St Paul would never have consented to put himself under an obligation to the Church under these conditions. Cf. 1 Cor. ix. 12; 2 Cor. ix.—xiii.

We have already suggested (p. xlv) that the passage iii. 2 ff. is not concerned with Judaizing Christians, and it, therefore, cannot be used as evidence for the existence of a powerful Jewish Christian community at Philippi. But even if it were satisfactorily established that the Apostle had in view here his old and bitter opponents it is most improbable that they were to be found within the Philippian Church itself. The whole tone of the Epistle is against any such cleavage within the Church as this would imply, and it is much more probable that the Judaizing peril, if it really existed, was approaching the Philippian Church from outside and that the Apostle thought it right to put the Church on its guard against it.

*Weaknesses in the Philippian Church.* Although the conditions at Philippi are on the whole satisfactory there are shadows in the picture here as well as in that of the Roman Church at the same period.

(a) The Church was apparently not entirely free from persecution. At Philippi, as well as in the Christian world as a whole, there were "adversaries" and it had been granted to the Church of Philippi to "suffer on behalf of Christ" (i. 28, 29). The Apostle's exhortation at this point seems to imply that the effect of persecution had been to strike terror into the hearts of some of the Philippian converts with the result that they were in danger of falling away and abandoning their newly-won faith. There was needed a firm and united attitude on the part of the whole Church, the development of true Christian courage and endurance, and the display of a fearless and confident front towards the enemy. The exhortation is enforced by an appeal to his own firmness and courage when confronted by similar conditions.

(b) The two key-notes of the Epistle are the Christian virtues of humility and unity, and it is, therefore, probable that in the Church of Philippi there was some tendency to disregard the prime necessity of these two ingredients in the perfect growth of the Christian body. The dispositions that conduced to the dissensions among the leading women of the Church, self-love, ambition, and

jealousy, were no doubt to some extent characteristic of other sections of the Church. The old Macedonian pride and independence and Roman arrogance, in both races the natural outcome of a long career of conquest, may have had something to do with this development. They produced a spirit of self-satisfaction and a sense of superiority among some of the members. The striking passage, iii. 11-16, where St Paul sketches his own personal Christian career and the classical description of the virtue of humility with Christ Himself as the great Exemplar in ii. 5-8 point to some such situation as we have suggested. The danger was one which often threatens the growth of a young and exceedingly energetic body, and although it had not yet become a serious menace it threatened the future welfare of the Church and evoked from the Apostle a grave and reasoned protest.

The failure of the later Philippian Church to realise the fair promise of its early life may have been due to its disregard of the Apostle's warning, and it is quite possible that it perished not so much from attacks from outside as from weaknesses inherent in itself which eventually produced disintegration and ruin.

(c) Closely connected with the party of "superiority and self-satisfaction" and forming indeed another wing of the section which arrogated to itself the title of "spiritual" was a section of Philippian Christians of whom St Paul speaks in terms of the gravest reprobation and severity. The Apostle's language in describing this party reaches the very climax of condemnation. They are the "enemies of the cross of Christ, whose God is the belly and whose glory is in their shame" (iii. 18, 19). Many scholars interpret this passage as having reference to Jewish Christians (see note *in loc.*), but St Paul's terms here are difficult to understand if he had in view Jews, who were generally pure and careful in their outward lives, whereas they are perfectly intelligible if applied to a type of Gentile Christian with whom we are quite familiar in other Pauline Epistles. It is more than probable that the assumption of superiority and the claim to "perfection" (iii. 15) associated with the one wing and the libertinism which the Apostle bewails in the other are both traceable to the same cause. In both cases we are reminded of the "spiritual" party in the Church of Corinth (1 Cor. ii. 10-13, 15, 16, iii. 1, and chapters viii., ix., x.) which claimed that, as the Spirit was received in the Christian Sacraments and gave eternal life to the recipient, religion was consequently entirely a matter of the

spirit. This conception had two practical results. In the one case it produced the ascetic who prided himself upon his abstinence from all that is carnal, and in the other it accounted for the immorality of those who claimed that what was done in and through the body could not affect the life of the spirit. Traces of both these tendencies are discernible in our Epistle, but to see them when they have reached their complete development we have to study the teaching of the later Gnostic sects.

#### VIII. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EPISTLE.

(a) *Its style.* The first feature that strikes the reader of the Epistle is that it is a real letter. There is no trace of the studied and conventional style of the classical epistle: there is no straining after effect and nothing to denote a production composed for the eye of the public. From beginning to end it is personal, intimate, and informal. Jowett once remarked that St Paul's Epistles "read like good conversation", and of no Epistle is this perhaps so true as of the Epistle to the Philippians. It reminds one rather of a person speaking to his beloved converts face to face than writing to them from a distance, and this is perhaps explained by the fact that the letter was almost certainly dictated to and copied by an amanuensis. We seek in vain for any sign of careful and reasoned method in its composition, and it is so free from anything like logical sequence that it is often a matter of considerable difficulty to trace the exact sequence between one paragraph and another. The intimate and familiar style is also heightened by the absence of the official designation "Apostle" in the address of the letter. It is not the "Apostle" armed with authority that speaks here, but the personal friend and the Christian brother writing to those who were very near his heart. Both he and they are "servants of Jesus Christ". The strictly doctrinal element is also introduced subordinately. It is the personal relations, both on his side and theirs, that are allowed to have their full sway. He is much concerned with their anxiety about himself and with their sympathy for him in his many afflictions, and he strives tenderly, as a father with his children, to quiet their minds, to encourage them in the face of trials, and to correct what faults he finds among them. And even in the matter of correction, where the claim to Apostolic authority would have been natural, it is more the father or the brother that is speaking



than the official. So again it is to his own example and not to his authority that he appeals when he would drive home the lesson that is needed. His gratitude for their generous thought for himself is much in his mind and is in evidence all through the Epistle.

(b) *Its tone.* It has well been called the "Epistle of love" among St Paul's letters, and it is worthy of note that the love manifested here is not one-sided. The letter helps us to realise not only the Apostle's fervent love for his children in the faith, but the earnest and warm requital of that love on the part of the Philippian Christians. The whole tone of the Epistle is coloured by the immediate purpose of its writing, viz. to thank them for their loving thought and generous action towards himself. The letter is indeed a wonderful and illuminating illustration of the closeness of the tie which bound the Apostle to his converts, and the intimacy is not interrupted here, as in so many Churches which owed their existence to him, by disloyalty and suspicion. The atmosphere surrounding him and the Church is permeated through and through by love unfeigned, undisturbed, and unwearying, a love that translates itself into action and expresses itself in warmhearted sympathy and support on the one side and in the sincerest gratitude on the other.

A second note of the Epistle, not less conspicuous than the spirit of love with which it is suffused is that of "joy". There was much in the surroundings which tended to gloom and depression; the darkness of an uncertain future, the conduct of an active section of the Roman Church, his comparative loneliness and isolation and the pressure of advancing years, while even at Philippi matters were not altogether conducive to satisfaction and peace of mind. And yet throughout the Epistle the joy of the Christian Apostle in Christ breaks through the overhanging clouds. Ever and anon amidst a Babel of confusing sounds there rings the clarion note "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, rejoice". But although the dominant note of the Epistle is one of joy and contentment it nevertheless reveals a remarkable variety of moods in the Apostle. As the letter proceeds, passage by passage, the change of mood is clearly discernible. No one particular feeling lasts long, but is soon followed by its antithesis, and joy often gives way to sorrow. His hopeful outlook upon the progress of the Gospel is interrupted by his fears of what may happen when his own presence and influence

are withdrawn, and his satisfaction concerning the spiritual condition of the Church of Philippi as a whole gives way to tears of bitter sorrow when he thinks of those who are "the enemies of the cross of Christ". His confidence in the favourable issue of his trial changes into a fearful anticipation of possible condemnation and death, and his calm and peaceful view of death as rest in Christ is modified by a consciousness of unworthiness and lack of perfection (Drummond, *Philippians*, p. 358). So throughout the Epistle light and shadow are intermingled, and yet the predominating impression is that of a soul uplifted, full of joy and confidence in the Lord, rejoicing in the many proofs of God's goodness both to himself and to the Church, and looking steadfastly to the end which shall find him "with Christ".

(c) *The Old Testament in the Epistle.* The Old Testament is never deliberately quoted in the Epistle, and its contents are not cited by the Apostle for the purpose of pressing home an argument as in some of his other Epistles. The influence of the LXX is, however, frequently apparent, and echoes of its language and sometimes its exact words are found in the body of the Epistle. Thus i. 19 is a verbal reproduction of Job xiii. 16 καὶ τοῦτό μοι ἀποβήσεται εἰς σωτηρίαν.

The passage wherein St Paul describes the final exaltation of Christ in ii. 10 f. is an adaptation of Isaiah xlv. 23 ὅτι ἐμοὶ κάμψει πᾶν γόνυ καὶ ὁμείται πᾶσα γλῶσσα τὸν θεόν.

The following phrases and expressions are also reminiscent of the Old Testament:

ii. 15 ἵνα γένησθε ἄμεμπτοι καὶ ἀκέραιοι, τέκνα θεοῦ, ἄμωμα μέσον γενεᾶς σκολιᾶς καὶ διεστραμμένης. Cf. Deut. xxxii. 5 ἡμάρτοσαν, οὐκ αὐτῷ τέκνα, μωμητά· γενεὰ σκολιὰ καὶ διεστραμμένη.

ii. 16 οὐκ εἰς κενὸν ἔδραμον, οὐδὲ εἰς κενὸν ἐκοπίασα. Cf. Isaiah xlix. 4; lxx. 23 κενῶς ἐκοπίασα· οὐ κοπιᾶσουσιν εἰς κενόν.

iv. 3 ἐν βίβλῳ ζωῆς. Cf. Psalm lxviii. 28 ἐκ βίβλου ζώντων.

iv. 18 ὁσμὴν εὐωδίας. Cf. Ezekiel xx. 41 ἐν ὁσμῇ εὐωδίας.

## IX. ST PAUL IN THE EPISTLE.

The Epistle is most valuable for the insight it gives us into special aspects of the Apostle's character, some of which have already been touched upon in the preceding section. It provides us with a wholesome corrective of a narrow view of the Apostle's character as a whole which has been too common among a certain class of writers. These take for granted that the great dogmatic and controversial Epistles reveal his personality in all its completeness, with the result that he has been standardised as a man of uncompromising sternness, jealous of his own position and authority, rejoicing in disputes and invective, and practically devoid of those gentler qualities which we associate with our ideal of a complete man and exemplary Christian. In our Epistle an entirely different view of his character is revealed to us, a view which helps us to realise that the Epistles to Galatia and Corinth have displayed only one side of the man and the Apostle, and that not the most attractive and lovable side. But even in these very letters there were elements which threw an occasional light upon the true character of St Paul. The "Psalm of Love" in 1 Cor. xiii. and certain passages in 2 Corinthians which betray his intense eagerness to forgive and his longing for reconciliation should have been sufficient in themselves to show that he was no mere upholder of Apostolic authority, the uncompromising opponent of error in life and doctrine, the hard and unsympathetic judge of all that was not quite in accord with his own ideas, as so many writers have pictured him. And these fitful gleams of another and gentler side of his character which we obtain from these Epistles are developed into the clearest daylight by what we learn of him in our Epistle. It is the most personal of all his letters and enables us to understand "Paul, the Man" more fully and more accurately than any other source. We learn, first of all, that he was not a man of one mood, which was fixed, determined, and constant at all times, but that he was particularly sensitive to his environment and generally governed by the immediate situation and by the special relationship existing between him and his correspondents. Where sternness, the assertion of Apostolic authority, and the functions of a judge are demanded by the internal condition of a particular Church these qualities are exercised to the full, but where a Church like that of Philippi was free from serious error, obedient and loyal to Christ and to its

founder, in full sympathy with his teaching and bound to him by close ties of affection, the tender and human side of his character is displayed in all its attractiveness. The strong, stern, and uncompromising Apostle of the letters to the Churches of Galatia and Corinth becomes the tender-hearted, appreciative, affectionate, and broad-minded Christian brother of the Philippian Epistle. To the student who is satisfied that the St Paul of the controversial letters is the true and complete Apostle the character of the writer of our Epistle is unintelligible, and he is driven to the conclusion that it was not written by St Paul at all. The authorities who take this view have not taken into consideration the difference in the conditions governing the different letters. In Galatia and Corinth the issues were vital and Christianity itself was at stake, and because of this there was not, and could not be, any question of compromise or suspension of judgment. In Philippi and Rome, on the other hand, the matters in dispute were primarily of a personal nature, and the real essence of the Gospel was not imperilled. The conduct of a certain section of Christians might engender pain and sorrow to himself personally, but the truth in Christ was not seriously endangered. The kingdom of Christ was being extended, not entirely on lines which commended themselves to him, yet because it was being extended he would acquiesce, aye, and rejoice in the fact. Our Epistle, therefore, illustrates the Apostle's principles admirably. When the essential content of the Gospel was being undermined he would fight with all the strength and determination at his command, but when it was only a question of his own personal views and predilections he could forgive and forget.

There is another factor to be considered before we have fully explained the peculiar atmosphere of joy and serenity which surrounds the Epistle. The mildness of judgment and the breadth of sympathy manifested in the letter are not due merely to the fact that the conditions were particularly favourable at Philippi, but because the whole composition is conceived in the spirit of love. That St Paul should love every Church which owed its faith to himself is only natural, and it is no less natural that some Churches should attract a greater share of his affection than others, and this was eminently true of the Church of Philippi. From the very day which witnessed the first preaching of Christ in that city his love for the Philippians was only equalled by their love towards him. And further, this love had its source in Christ, manifested itself in



activity in Christ, and looked to Christ as its crown and consummation. It is the mutual love with its centre in Christ through which the Apostle approached this Church, and this softened every judgment that might otherwise have been harsh, minimised the defects and weaknesses, and clothed his message with a friendliness and tenderness that are wonderfully winning and attractive.

Among the other qualities displayed in this Epistle which are essential elements in St Paul's life and character we may mention his *mysticism*, *humility*, and *tactfulness*.

### *The Mysticism of St Paul.*

There is no Epistle of St Paul which is more fully charged with what we may call the "mysticism" of the Apostle than the Epistle to the Philippians. Every thought, every sentiment, every action is brought into vital relation with Christ, and the whole life of the Apostle himself and of the Christian believer is identified with the life of Christ. The expression "in Christ" or "in Christ Jesus", which is perhaps the most characteristic of all the Pauline phrases, recurs over and over again and reveals the fundamental basis of his thought. The following are some of the most important passages which manifest this, the mystic side of St Paul's character: "The saints in Christ Jesus", i. 1, iv. 21. "How I long after you all in the tender mercies of Christ Jesus", i. 8. "To me to live is Christ", i. 21. "That your glorying may be in Christ Jesus", i. 26. "If there is therefore any comfort in Christ", ii. 1. "I trust in the Lord that I shall come shortly", ii. 24. "Stand fast in the Lord", iv. 1.

His life, joys, sorrows, hopes, fears, plans and purposes are all rooted in Christ, and what is true of himself he predicates of all Christians, whether as individuals or in their corporate capacity. "The saints" as constituting the Church at Philippi are "in Christ" and every individual "saint" is possessed of the same privilege. This mystical union of the Christian with Christ, by means of which the whole being of the Christian is transformed and identified with Him, was, in St Paul's mind, the outcome of a spiritual act of faith. Faith in Christ meant dying with Him to sin and rising again to newness of life, and so close and essential was the union thus effected that the Apostle represents his whole being as possessed by Christ Himself. "It is no longer I that live but Christ liveth in me". For him Christ was no longer a mere historical Person but a Spirit within

his heart and mind. It was not his own voice that spake but the voice of Christ within him, and the obedience that he gave to the promptings of his better self became in reality obedience to the Divine Will which had possessed and appropriated his own. And more, in virtue of this union, and only in virtue of it, the acts, the powers, the holiness, and the experiences of the life of Christ avail for him. "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me", he declares in our Epistle, iv. 13.

### *The Humility of St Paul.*

Hand in hand with this sublime consciousness of vital union with Christ and of the identification of his own life with that of the Saviour there is to be seen the essential humility of the Christian disciple. The striking parallelism between the two sections, ii. 5-11 and iii. 3-16 has already been commented on (p. xlvii). In St Paul's life as in that of the Master there had been a "self-emptying", and the way of exaltation in his own case as in that of Christ was based on a real surrender. Separated by an immeasurable distance and on entirely different planes, the course of the Master and of His disciple followed the same lines. Christ, in order that He might be highly exalted and be given a Name above every name, had willingly abandoned His condition of glory which had been His from all eternity and had taken on the form of a servant and had died on the Cross. So too the Apostle had surrendered the privileges which were his as a Pharisaic Jew, and all that he had prized as of the utmost value he had counted but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, that he might gain Him and be found in Him. To him, therefore, as to the Lord the way of surrender had been the road to ultimate triumph and glory. The humility that with all the force at his command he impresses upon the Philippians he illustrates by his own example as well as that of Christ. He may be united to Christ in every fibre of his being, yet there is none of that false assurance, that presumptuous sense of absolute security which was the bane of many a Gentile Christian, who, because he was baptized into Christ and had partaken of the Christian Mysteries, thought that no further effort was needed and that Christian morality need not be wedded to Christian profession. Christian life was to the Apostle ever a life of constant striving and gradual and difficult progress: the end, the final union with the

glorified Lord, was not yet in sight. In that very beautiful and pathetic passage, iii. 11-16 he emphasises the need for continuous and unceasing effort on the part of the Christian, condemns equally an undue elation which arises from the successes of the past and the despondency which follows its failures, but his conception of the Christian course is, nevertheless, lightened by the resplendent hope of the reward of final victory.

So in every feature, in its surrender of privilege, in its humiliation and suffering, in its effort and struggle, and in its ultimate triumph and reward the life of the Christian, as illustrated by that of St Paul, must correspond with the life of Christ "who left us an example that we should follow His steps" (1 St Peter, ii. 21).

### *The Tactfulness of St Paul.*

Another feature in the Apostle's character which is well illustrated by our Epistle is his tactfulness. In this respect it shares with the Epistle to Philemon the privilege of presenting St Paul to the world as the Christian gentleman. The passage, iv. 10-20, in which he conveys his gratitude to the Philippians for their generous gifts is a model of what such an expression of thanks should be. He opens with a full recognition of their constant thought for him and of the fact that it was only lack of opportunity that prevented it from taking practical form earlier. At the same time he is anxious to impress upon them his independence of material conditions and his sufficiency in Christ, but is nevertheless extremely careful lest there should be the slightest hint of any want of gratitude on his part. There is in the passage a beautiful blending of true thankfulness to the Philippians with a sense of his own absolute dependence upon Christ, and he lifts the whole transaction to a lofty plane whereon the Philippians' service to himself becomes a "sacrifice, acceptable, well-pleasing to God", iv. 18.

### *St Paul at the close of his life.*

The Epistle is also interesting as giving us a picture of St Paul in the last stage of his life. It is essentially a letter of his mature age when death seemed very near. We witness here the fruit of St Paul's long years of study in the school of Christ and of experience. With advancing years there arrives a change in the appreciation of

values, followed by a corresponding change in methods. We see in our Epistle the result perhaps of what corresponded to the vision vouchsafed to Elijah on Mount Horeb when he learnt that God was not in the whirlwind, earthquake, or fire, but in the still small voice of love and gentleness. St Paul too may have realised in the course of long years of fruitful experience that sternness, violence, and invective are not the strongest forces in the realm of Christ and that more ground may be gained and richer results achieved by the exercise of the more markedly Christian virtues of sympathy, affection, and tenderness. Some such process as this is perhaps necessary to explain the marked change between the tone of his later Epistles and that of his earlier ones.

Further, the possible imminent approach of death must have coloured his vision and softened his character and judgment. His own outlook upon death is so beautiful, confident, and peaceful that it must have had a corresponding effect upon his outlook upon the Church and the world. Faults and weaknesses receded into the background, and his mind became concentrated upon what is admirable, noble, and attractive in the Church and in the world around it. In this connection his appreciation of what was valuable in pagan life and philosophy is very striking. In iv. 8 he approaches very closely to the ideal of the Greek philosopher in his conception of honour and worth. It is the only place where the Greek term for "virtue" is used in the New Testament, and here the "beautiful" also stands side by side with the "good" in close fellowship.

Finally we note how completely the Apostle has been captured by the love of Christ. It is the dogmatic side of Christianity that has received most attention at the hands of St Paul, and "faith" has ever been regarded as the typical Pauline quality, but in our Epistle we see his whole being transfigured and illuminated by love. Love has indeed come to its own in St Paul of the Philippian letter, although it has its honoured place, but more in theory as the root of Christian conduct, in Romans, 1 Corinthians, and notably in Ephesians. So the Epistle remains on the whole the truest, most beautiful, and most complete representation of St Paul the Christian which has come down to us.



## X. THE DOCTRINE OF THE EPISTLE.

The Epistle to the Philippians is the least doctrinal of all St Paul's Epistles to the Churches, and there is in it no attempt at any formulated discussion of any point of Christian doctrine. This is to be attributed to the fact that there were no serious errors prevalent in the Philippian Church as there were in the Churches of Galatia for instance, and that no matter of doctrine was being questioned as was the case in the Church of Corinth. Yet some of the most important statements of Christian doctrine extant are found embedded in it. Much, however, of the teaching contained in it is implicit rather than explicit, and even where a well-defined doctrinal statement is met with it is generally in the form of a confirmation or illustration of a practical lesson and is not a formal definition of the doctrine itself. The implications of the Epistle are, however, so weighty and form such an important contribution to the body of Christian teaching that they demand to be considered at some length. The doctrinal contents of the Epistle may be considered from the following aspects.

1. The Christology.
2. The Eschatology.
3. The doctrine of Justification.

1. *The Christology of the Epistle.*

*Phil.* ii. 5-11.

By far the most important and pregnant statement of doctrine in the Epistle is the passage ii. 5-11, and it would be difficult to find even in the formulated and elaborate discussions on the Being and Person of Christ in the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians a more definite and more exalted Christological conception. The statement has become an integral factor in every system of Christology and must, therefore, be considered from that point of view. It comes at the end of a particularly impressive exhortation to unity, to a unity based on lowliness of mind and a complete forgetfulness of self, and the lesson is driven home by an appeal to the example of Christ as the great revelation of the lowly and unselfish spirit in action.

The discussion turns very largely upon the exact meaning in classical and contemporary Greek of some of the salient terms in the passage, but it would be out of place in a Commentary of this character to consider this aspect of the question, and we must be content here with defining the general lines along which the discussion proceeds. We are met at the very outset by a fundamental difference of opinion as to the correct interpretation of the passage as a whole. The majority of scholars are of opinion that St Paul is speaking here of Christ in three different spheres of existence, the pre-Incarnate, Incarnate, and Exalted Christ, but there is a considerable school of thought which confines the reference to the historical Christ and refuses to see in the statement any evidence that the Apostle believed in a pre-existent, pre-Incarnate Christ, or if he did believe this, that he had His pre-existence in his mind at that moment.

We will consider first of all the position maintained by the second school of thought. This interpretation is comparatively modern in its origin and was practically unknown in the early centuries of the Church's life, although, in this as in so many other doctrinal matters, Pelagius followed a line of his own and took this view of the passage. It owes its present position very largely to the influence of Erasmus and Luther, and it has been adopted by a large body of Continental scholars. An admirable statement of the theory is given by Sabatier (*St Paul*, pp. 256 ff.) which we shall do well to quote. According to him St Paul is thinking not of some celestial being, but of the historical Christ, and it is His earthly life that he so admirably sums up in the idea of renunciation and obedience. The subject of the paragraph is Christ coming to glory through renunciation, and in order to make this possible He must have been already in Himself and by nature of a higher condition. This is expressed by the phrase "being in the form of God", which expresses a substantial relation to God, but does not mean absolute Divinity. There is one stage higher, "to be on an equality with God", a position which Christ might have thought of seizing, but which He did not usurp. This higher position is eventually to be His, but only by the full development of His moral being, and there is between His original condition of "being in the form of God" and His destined exaltation to "equality with God" a progress, a real development of His being.

This progress is accomplished in three stages.

1. He did not through egotism or pride seek to place Himself on a level with God or prematurely usurp the Divine equality.

2. "*He annihilated Himself*". Christ, who by the order of His being was of Divine nature, renounced the Divine form of His essence and annihilated His personal will in the presence of His Father's will. He sacrifices Himself and performs a definite moral act in order that He may become truly Himself and fulfil His destiny. The sacrifice is defined in the clause, "taking the form of a servant", which is further explained in the expressions "being made in the likeness of men", "being found in fashion as a man".

3. *He rendered obedience*, which reached its consummation in the death of the Cross and so illustrated His own law of the moral life that "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted". So by reaching the lowest depth of His humiliation in His death on the Cross He attained the very height of His glory and fulfilled His destiny, a condition of complete and actual Divine royalty.

Sabatier has his own views with regard to certain particulars in St Paul's statement which are not shared by those who maintain that the Apostle has in mind throughout the historical Christ, but the above may be taken as representing very fairly the general idea of those who favour this interpretation. The principal advantage that is claimed for this view is that it is difficult from the point of view of a right moral judgment to see how the acts of a Divine being have any ethical value for us and that St Paul, therefore, could hardly have set forth for our example the action of a pre-existent and purely Divine Christ.

The main objection to the theory as a whole is that it does not accord with the structure of the passage. If the Christ that was in the thought of St Paul was the Incarnate Christ we have only two stages in the process described here, viz. the Incarnate and the Exalted life, whereas the passage seems to imply three definite stages.

1. "Being in the form of God He counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God".

2. "But emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, etc."

3. "Wherefore God also highly exalted Him".

There is a progress here, with a definite point of departure, a journey, and a return to still higher glory and honour. The progress did not begin at the moment of Incarnation, as the theory we

are discussing would lead us to understand, but was an act of the will of the Divine Son while yet in the bosom of His Father.

The rival theory may be said to be that of the Church as a whole, although here again there are varieties of opinion on matters of detail. The best exposition of this view is unquestionably that of Dr Gifford (E. H. Gifford, *The Incarnation*, London, 1897) and we shall follow him closely in what follows. It has at any rate the decided advantage of corresponding to the structure of the Apostolic statement and of giving an explanation of the three distinct stages which that statement seems to contemplate.

1. The Christ is the *pre-Incarnate Christ*, originally God by nature, "being in the form of God", who did not consider that "equality with God", i.e. the outward condition of glory which was the manifestation of His Divine nature, was a treasure to be held fast.

2. At the *Incarnation* "He emptied Himself" temporarily of the outward glory of Deity and "took upon Himself the nature of a bond-servant", becoming man, yet not mere man but rather the representative of mankind, "in the likeness of *men*". In the eyes of men He was a man like themselves, "being found in fashion as a man", i.e. they saw in Him a human form, bearing, action, mode of life, wants and their satisfaction, which they recognised as those common to humanity. In this guise He submitted Himself to further humiliation and partook not only of the nature of a bond-servant but also of his shameful death by dying on the cross, and thus proceeded to the extreme and final depth of self-abasement.

3. *The Exaltation*. As the self-humiliation was complete and without reserve so the reward was proportionately great. To Him there was given a Name above every name, and the whole creation, animate and inanimate, was to join in the homage and praise due to Him who now, as His rightful reward, enters again upon the glory which He had with His Father before the world was (St John xvii. 5).

It will be noticed that in this exposition the phrases "being in the form of God" and "being on an equality with God" are interpreted as referring to two different qualities of the Godhead, the one to the essential nature of the Deity, inseparable from it, while the second is said to imply the circumstances of glory and majesty associated with the manifestations of the Godhead which could be resigned temporarily. The "self-emptying" of the pre-Incarnate Christ consisted, therefore, in the laying aside at the Incarnation of that



equality of glory, majesty, and honour which He possessed in His pre-existent state, and for the restoration of which He prayed in St John xvii. 5. There is, however, a considerable school of thought and a growing one, which, while it accepts the main proposition that the "self-emptying" is predicated of the pre-Incarnate Christ, does not agree with the exposition above in some of its more important details. The most prominent representative of this school is the Bishop of Oxford, Dr Gore. The difference of opinion is concerned chiefly with the meaning of "equality with God" and with the precise definition of that of which Christ emptied Himself. Dr Gore and those who think with him practically equate the two expressions "being in the form of God" and "being on an equality with God", with the result that the "self-emptying" is held to imply an abandonment not merely of what was external, the outward glories of Deity, but of some of the internal, essential attributes of the Godhead. It may be well to quote the Bishop's own words on this point. "Christ in His pre-existent state was living in the permanent characteristics of the life of God, had a right to remain in it, it belonged to Him, but He regarded not His prerogatives as a prize to be clutched at. For love of us He abjured the prerogatives of equality with God and by an act of deliberate self-abnegation He so emptied Himself as to assume the permanent characteristics of human or servile life, 'the form of a servant'. In outward appearance He was like other men 'and was found in fashion as a man', i.e. in the transitory quality of our mortality. He took the 'form', 'likeness', 'fashion' of manhood, all. Thus remaining in unchanged personality He is exhibited as 'laying aside the mode of divine existence in order to assume the human'" (*Dissertations on the Incarnation*, pp. 88, 89).

Another view, and a very interesting one, which also regards the passage as contemplating the pre-Incarnate Christ, is that held by Kennedy (*Expositor's N.T.* Vol. III. pp. 435 ff.), Garvie (*Expositor*, VII. vii. pp. 37-41) and Somerville (*St Paul's Conception of Christ*, pp. 190 f.). According to this interpretation "equality with God" is not what the pre-Incarnate possessed originally, but is something still future and only became His after He had finished His earthly course, when "God highly exalted Him". In Somerville's words St Paul's thought here is that "the Pre-Incarnate One has presented to Him a career by which He was able to realise the possibilities that lay wrapt in His being 'in the form of God'. Christ might

have asserted His right to be worshipped as God, but did not regard 'equality with God' as a thing to be clutched at, but looked rather to the good of men and renounced His own things to enter upon a course of self-denying service to others and of humble obedience to the will of God. He preferred to receive from His Father the sovereignty over all as the Divine recognition of His self-effacement for others rather than by the assertion of His own right". It will be seen that this view is in agreement with Sabatier's on the point that there is in the passage a progress from what is a less perfect form of being to one that is perfect and complete. The exalted state is not a simple return to the pre-Incarnate stage, but means an accession of personal greatness for which His earthly career furnished the needed preparation and discipline. There is much that is attractive in this interpretation but it is open to the very simple objection that it is difficult to understand how, if "equality with God" was still in the future, St Paul could have spoken of Christ as "emptying Himself" of it. How can one divest oneself of what one does not possess?

It is not within the province of this Commentary to enter upon a lengthy discussion of the respective merits of these different interpretations and I must content myself with placing them before the reader in the words of their foremost exponents. I must at the same time express my decided preference for the view which has been generally prevalent in the Church. This view interprets St Paul as having in his thought the complete course of Christ, pre-Incarnate, Incarnate, and Exalted. It also retains for Him in His Incarnate being all the essential attributes of the Godhead, while doing full justice to the idea of self-abasement, in that He emptied Himself of the outward glory and honour of His Divine manifestation. It preserves the breadth and unity of conception which are so characteristic of the statement as a whole. It gives us a Christ in whom perfect Godhead and perfect Manhood are inseparably united in one Divine Person, and in the fact that Christ in His Incarnate state still remains "in the form of God" we have a complete assurance that the moral attributes of His Godhead are fully and faithfully represented in the Incarnate Word.

### *The Kenotic theory.*

We have not exhausted the importance and interest of this Christological passage when we have discussed its interpretation

as a whole, for in recent years it has attracted more attention than ever because it has been pressed into the service of what is generally termed "the Kenotic theory". (The "kenosis" of Christ which underlies the theory is derived from the Greek verb ἐκένωσε in Phil. ii. 7, "He emptied Himself".) The theory is specially associated with the name of Dr Gore, who was principally responsible for introducing it into public notice in this country. We may, therefore, state it briefly in his words. "Our Lord refrained from the divine mode of consciousness within the sphere of His human life that He might really enter into human experience" (*Dissertations on the Incarnation*, p. 97). The Bishop was not the originator of the idea for it is in some respects a product of the Reformation. It receives no support from early ecclesiastical writers, and the Church for close upon 1500 years knew practically nothing of it. Dr Gore attributes this silence to the fact that theologians during all these centuries hardly attempted to explain the intellectual phenomena of our Lord during the period of His humiliation. It was the theologians of the Reformation, and Luther in particular, who began to lay stress upon the limitations of our Lord's manhood, and since that time a "kenotic theory" of some kind has been widely held by representatives of the Lutheran and reformed Churches on the Continent. Luther, as we have seen, interpreted the Christological passage we have been discussing as referring to the Incarnate Christ, and was driven to some such explanation of the phrase "He emptied Himself" as is implied in kenoticism. Dr Gore disagrees with Luther on this point and sees in St Paul's statement a state of being previous to the Incarnation and ascribes the first stage of the process described by the Apostle to the pre-existent Christ, but they are at one in their insistence upon the limitations of Christ's human consciousness implied in the expression "He emptied Himself". Now if the view taken of the passage in this Commentary be correct there is no room in it for a "kenosis" in the Bishop's sense of the term, because what Christ abandoned at His Incarnation was not anything internal to His being, the essential attributes of His Godhead, but the external glory and condition.

It is not implied here that there was no real "kenosis", no real limitation upon the Divine omniscience and omnipotence within the sphere of Christ's Incarnate life, but merely that the theory derives no direct support from this particular passage.

The metaphysical question as to the relation of the human nature

in Christ to the essential attributes of the Godhead did not concern St Paul here and the passage does nothing more than contrast the two modes of life, life in the pre-Incarnate and life in the Incarnate state. Throughout the statement the Godhead of Christ in the Apostle's thought remains exactly on the same level; the "being in the form of God" is not abandoned at the Incarnation, it is only veiled, to be revealed again in all its glory at the Exaltation.

But as there will be doubtless many readers who are not prepared to accept this view and are interested in the "Kenotic theory" I have thought it right to give a brief account of it in its various aspects.

It ought to be understood at the outset that the "kenosis" which is postulated of Christ is not based fundamentally on this passage in our Epistle and that St Paul's statement is only utilised to buttress an idea derived from other sources. The theory is, in reality, founded on the portrait of Christ alleged to be given in the Gospels, which, we are told, is not intelligible unless we assume some limitations upon Divine omniscience and omnipotence in His Incarnate life. It is also claimed that some such limitations are demanded by the conception of Christ as a true and perfect man, in whom there was a growth of human will and knowledge. As instances of the "kenosis" in action there are cited St Mark xv. 34 = St Matth. xxvii. 46, which imply that the intercourse between Father and Son was not always perfect: St Mark xiii. 32 and St John xvii. 4, 5 where Christ Himself seems to speak of limitations of His own knowledge and glory: St Luke ii. 40-52 and Hebrews iv. 15; v. 7, 8, where the New Testament writers assume on His part a growth in wisdom and learning and emphasise the reality of the temptation. Further, He asks questions which seem to imply a natural need of information, and His constant recourse to prayer is characteristically human as an expression of faith and trust. He never extends our stock of knowledge, physical or historical, out of His Divine omniscience, and in these matters He is perfectly content to accept the current conceptions of His age. The inference from these facts is perfectly clear, simple, and wholly justifiable, viz. that our Lord during His earthly life "lived and taught and thought and was inspired as a true and proper man, under the limitations of consciousness which alone made possible a really human experience" (Gore, *u. s.* p. 87).

There is, however, a considerable difference of opinion as to the extent of this "kenosis".



There is the "Absolute Kenotic view" which is associated in Germany with Gess and in Switzerland with Godet, a scholar well known in English circles. Godet, starting from St John i. 14, which he interpreted in a manner all his own, taught that the Son in becoming Incarnate ceased to live the life of the Godhead and to exercise His cosmic functions, which means that Christ during His period of humiliation entirely abandoned His position and functions in the Blessed Trinity. This assumption is so wholly at variance with the spirit and content of the New Testament that it need not detain us further.

There are various gradations between this extreme view and that for which Dr Gore is responsible and which is now prevalent in this country. According to this there was a real abandonment of Divine attributes and prerogatives within a certain sphere, but not an absolute abandonment. Christ still retained His cosmic functions, and the "kenosis" postulated in this theory only contemplates a state of limitation within the sphere of humanity, which is compatible with the exercise in another sphere of the fulness of Divine power by the same Divine Person.

I am prepared to accept the Bishop's view as a fairly true and correct explanation of certain features in the Gospel portrait of Christ, but with certain reservations which can be best expressed in some very pregnant words of the late Dr W. Bright (*Waymarks in Church History*, Appendix, pp. 392, 393). "In regard to the kenosis, if it is once granted that during Christ's ministry among men, even at the lowest point of self-abasement, He was still as God 'upholding all things by the word of His power', this is enough to carry the principle of the interpretation of Phil. ii. 6 which confines the kenosis to the sphere of His humanity. For outside these limits, if He acted as God at all, He must so act altogether. Within these limits He dispensed with manifestations of His Divine Majesty, except on occasions and for special ends. As a rule He held in reserve, and by a continuous self-restraint, the exercise of divine powers, and accepted the conditions of human life with all its sinless infirmities."

The advantages of the theory are that it emphasises the real human experiences, sufferings, and limitations of Christ during His earthly course. It has restored the historical humanity of Christ to its right place in the conception of His Person. The tendency of Catholic theology in the past has been to allow the human in

Christ to be swallowed up and lost in the Divine and so to remove Him far from human sympathies. Later teaching has restored the balance and given us a Christ, perfectly Divine, but also accessible to man through His perfect humanity. At the same time I do not consider that this passage in our Epistle can be justifiably cited in support of the theory. There is no evidence that St Paul ever took this view of our Lord's Person and consciousness, and I fail to see here any proof that there was in his mind a "kenosis" of this type. The "emptying" of which the Apostle speaks was an abandonment of outward glory only, and the question of the relations of the Divine and human in Christ does not enter, nor do we find a solution of that very difficult problem in this passage.

*Note.*—A full discussion of the Kenotic theories will be found in Bruce, *The Humiliation of Christ* (T. and T. Clark, 1889) and in some excellent chapters in Forsyth, *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1910).

## 2. *The Eschatology of the Epistle.*

The eschatological teaching of the Epistle is confined to a few casual expressions, and there is nothing in the shape of a formulated scheme of eschatology to be found in it.

1. There is considerable stress on the coming of "the day of the Lord", "the day of Christ", or "the day of Jesus Christ". Cf. i. 6, 10, ii. 16, while the comparative imminence of the coming finds expression in iv. 5 "The Lord is at hand".

2. Death and its sequel are dwelt upon in a passage of great pathos in i. 21-26.

3. In ii. 10-11 there is a paragraph which seems to extend the benefits of Christ's redemption to the world of spiritual things. Cf. "In the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth".

4. In iii. 21 the resurrection body is described as "the body of His glory" as contrasted with "the body of our humiliation".

Two of these points demand further elucidation.

1. *The Parousia and Judgment.* In our Epistle the Apostle has travelled far from the view of his early missionary days when the Second Advent seemed to him and to the whole Church to be at the very door and likely to take place during his own lifetime. His

later experiences had, however, widened his vision, and his expectation of the imminent coming of Christ had receded into the distance. His ministry had enlarged his point of view; the world was to be gathered for Christ and His kingdom on earth was to include the whole of humanity. But the change was concerned with the point of time only. The parousia was just as real to him in the days of his Roman imprisonment as in those of his freer activity, and the note rings constantly in our Epistle. Here also, as in the earlier Epistles, it is to be a coming to judgment, and the "day of Jesus Christ" is to be a day of testing whether the work of grace has been perfected (i. 6), and the Christian conscience is "sincere and void of offence" (i. 10). That day will also test the permanent value of his own Apostolic labours, "that I may have whereof to glory in the day of Christ, that I did not run in vain, neither labour in vain" (ii. 16).

The comparative imminence and the certainty of the coming find a place here also. "The Lord is at hand" (iv. 5), and, therefore, time is short, and patient forbearance, considerateness, and humility are virtues which are essential to the true disciple of Christ.

2. *St Paul's doctrine of the Intermediate State.* Some scholars of note contend that our Epistle shows that St Paul had advanced and changed his view concerning the condition of the soul after death. In his earlier Epistles, and more especially in 1 Corinthians, his eschatological scheme contemplated a parousia, a resurrection of the dead, a last judgment, and after that the consummation of the blessed. But in our Epistle, we are told, the final step in this process becomes the immediate sequel of death, without any intervention of the parousia or resurrection, so that his earlier idea of a visible advent of Christ and a resurrection of the dead has given way to the more spiritual theory of the soul's entrance through death into its perfected heavenly state and full communion with Christ. The text upon which this view is based is i. 23, "having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better". Those who support this interpretation of the Apostle's words also maintain that this modification of his earlier teaching is foreshadowed in 2 Cor. v. 1-8, and more especially in the last verse of the passage, where he speaks of being "willing rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord". The change in his view of death and its sequel is said to be due to his perilous experiences at Ephesus and to the influence of Alexandrian Hellenism, and more particularly of the teaching of the Book of Wisdom, upon his mind. This

book, with which St Paul is supposed to have become familiar during his ministry at Ephesus which was a great centre of Alexandrian propaganda, has no resurrection of the body, and in it the souls of the righteous are united to God immediately after death. It is assumed that the effect of this book on the Apostle's mind, combined with the fact that he was at this period brought face to face with death, caused the doctrine of the resurrection to fall into the background and brought about the practical renunciation of the idea of the intermediate state. He had not entirely parted with the earlier Judaic conceptions which still have a considerable hold upon him, but the more spiritual Hellenistic idea, with its hope of immediate reunion of the righteous with the Lord, is gradually becoming dominant. Personally I do not consider that St Paul's words in our Epistle or in 2 Corinthians demand the interpretation put upon them by these scholars, and this particular view seems to me to furnish another instance of that mechanical and narrow conception of the Apostle's mind and the expression he gave to it which has been condemned elsewhere. (See p. lxvi.) There is not in St Paul's writings anything approaching a well-defined system of eschatology, and the differences between the ideas expressed in one Epistle and those in another are due not to any radical change of opinion on his part, but simply to a new point of view or to a new body of experiences. There is no real incompatibility between his view of death and its sequel as set forth in the Epistles to the Thessalonians, and that contained in our Epistle. Many other passages in the Epistle to the Philippians show conclusively that a parousia, a resurrection, and a judgment are fixed elements in the Pauline eschatology, but there are times when the Apostle's mind overleaps spaces and distances and he beholds himself in perfect fellowship with his Lord. It is some such mood as this in which we find him when he speaks of "departing and being with Christ". It is the yearning to die and be with Christ that is the ruling passion at the time, and the nearer the approach of death the more the will of the Apostle strives to bridge the gulf separating him from complete union with his Master. So the thought here transcends all experience of an intermediate state and obliterates the interval between death and the full consummation of blessedness.



### 3. *The Doctrine of Justification in the Epistle.*

The one solitary passage which touches upon this subject occurs in the middle of the autobiographical section in which the Apostle describes the effect of his conversion to Christianity and his subsequent spiritual development. The "righteousness" which he defines in iii. 9-11 is possessed of three qualities.

1. It is not a righteousness of his own, i.e. it is not attained by his own efforts to obey the law.

2. It is a righteousness through faith in Christ and is the gift of God by faith.

3. Its effect in action St Paul describes in the following words : " That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming conformed unto His death : if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead ".

The conception of righteousness in this passage proceeds on the whole on familiar lines, and is based essentially on St Paul's experience of life in Christ. To die with Christ, to rise with Him to newness of life, to crucify the flesh, and to attain to righteousness and salvation which come of loyalty to the Divine will as embodied in Christ, all these he has known in the course of his Christian progress which he sets forth in this particular chapter for the edification of his Philippian converts. The "justification" defined here is that quality in its complete aspect, including not only the entrance upon a new way of life but the whole process of sanctification in all its stages, until the Christian, who has been justified in Christ and mystically united with His death and resurrection, attains to final glory. St Paul had been born privileged, he tells us, but at his conversion he came to regard all that he reckoned as "gain" to be mere "loss". No longer would he strive to keep himself "right with God" (which is the fundamental meaning of "righteousness" in the Pauline sense) by "doing and doing and doing", he would not even assume that he had started right with God. The problem "How to become right with God?" once for all now faced him, and he found the answer in Christ. Through Christ a new way was opened, God's appointed way, and justification was now for him an accomplished fact (Westcott, *St Paul and Justification*, pp. 15, 16). The Apostle then goes on to exhibit this righteousness in action. It is a righteousness of God, active and energising, which implies on the part of the believer a close identification with the crucified and

risen Christ and an appropriation of His merits, leading finally to the "resurrection from the dead" and eternal bliss to follow.

It has been thought that the close association of the conception of righteousness with that of the resurrection introduces a new Pauline thought here. Thus M. Ménégoz (*Le Péché et la Rédemption*, p. 270) writing with reference to this passage says: "In Phil. iii. 10 we find the most precise statement of St Paul's doctrine of justification. The key to the system is on the one hand the idea of justification of Christ by death and resurrection, and on the other the idea of the identification of the individual with the person of Christ by faith". According to him, then, Christ Himself needed to be justified by the resurrection, and the Christian through faith becomes partaker of that justification of Christ's. What is new in the idea is the claim that Christ *Himself* needed to be justified by the resurrection, and this receives little, if any, support from St Paul's language here or elsewhere. The theory is discussed at some length in Bruce's *St Paul's Conception of Christianity*, pp. 161-164.

There is a sense in which justification is very closely connected with the resurrection of Christ, and the connection is very clearly defined by St Paul in Romans iv. 25, "Jesus our Lord who was... raised for our justification". It was the resurrection that put the crown and seal to the Atonement wrought by His death, and at the same time evoked the faith which makes the Atonement effectual. The resurrection is the most decisive proof of the atoning value of His death, for it is the proof that Christ was more than man, and without the resurrection the Sacrifice of Calvary would have been incomplete. It placed upon that sacrifice the stamp of God's approval and proved that it was accepted. (See Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, p. 117).

## XI. THE CHURCH IN THE EPISTLE.

### 1. *The Church as the "New Israel"*.

The references to the Church in the Epistle are few in number but are full of significance. The Christian community at Philippi is definitely named a "Church" in iv. 15. The title generally associated with the Christians both at Philippi and Rome in our Epistle is that found in i. 1, iv. 21, 22, where they are called "the

saints in Christ Jesus", a term which gives us a very clear idea of the Apostle's conception of the position and character of the Christian Church. The Greek word which is represented in our Version by "the saints" is the LXX term for Israel as a people, chosen, holy, and consecrated to Jehovah, and stands for the idea expressed, e.g. in Exod. xix. 6, "Ye shall be to me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation", and in Deut. xiv. 2, "The Lord thy God has chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto Himself". A phrase exactly corresponding to St Paul's usage in our Epistle is found in 1 Macc. x. 39, "to the saints at Jerusalem". The application of the term "saints" to denote the Christian body as a whole implies, then, that in the Apostle's mind it had now taken the place of Israel and had inherited all its titles and privileges and that it conferred all the blessings which Israel was meant to bestow upon the world. And further, it is of importance to note that the claim is extended to cover not only what is implied in the Israel of early days which was now practically represented by the Palestinian community of Jews, but includes within its limits that much wider Israel represented by the Judaism of the Dispersion, with its Greek Bible and its Greek converts, its broad outlook upon the world, and its great missionary propaganda. This claim is put forward most explicitly in iii. 3, where St Paul declares that Christians are "the true circumcision", a position that is amplified in 1 St Pet. ii. 9, "ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people", where every single privilege that is claimed for Israel in the extracts we have quoted from the Pentateuch are bodily transferred and applied to the Christian Church. The transference of all the claims and privileges of the Israel of old to the Church of Christ and the placing of the latter in the position of the New Israel are of considerable importance as defining the true relationship between the Old and New Covenants. Israel of old had been the recipient of the promises of God, but as it had now, by its unbelief and its refusal to accept Jesus as the Messiah, cut itself off from the mercy and favour of God, God's promises, which cannot be made void by man's unbelief, remain steadfast and sure and passed over to the small remnant of the nation which was obedient to the Messiah and thus became the New Israel. All that belonged to the Israel of old now belonged to the New: and more, because the coming of the Messiah increased and multiplied the privileges and blessings of the people of God. The conception of the Christian

Church as heir to all the claims, privileges and attributes of the Jewish Church involved two consequences.

1. The New Israel, like God's chosen people of old, must be a definitely visible society. Under the old dispensation Israel was plainly distinguished from the world debased in idolatry by its worship of the One True God who had revealed Himself to His people, and in the same way, the cleavage between the Christian Church, the New Israel, and all other religions must be sharply defined. To the Christian, as to the Israelite, there was vouchsafed the light of God's revelation and knowledge of His will, as contrasted with the darkness of the pagan world generally. On one side there were truth, knowledge, and service of God, and on the other the worship of the creature rather than the Creator. It was not the least of the services rendered by St Paul that he was the first to recognise the true significance of Christianity and to insist that the New Israel, which was originally confined to the small Jewish Christian community, should be so widened as to include within itself every Christian, whether Jew or Gentile. There were still barriers between God's people and the world around them, but they were barriers, not of nationality and race, but of ideal and character.

2. The conception also involved a continuity of life between the old and the new. Christ, the Messiah, did not establish a new and independent religious society as a rival to the old Israel, but a society which inherited and succeeded to all the prerogatives and claims of the Jewish people which had forfeited these by their unbelief. A new covenant was established, it is true, and established and sealed with the blood of the Incarnate and Crucified Saviour. The old covenant of Moses had done its work and was now obsolete, and the basis of salvation was no longer the observance of Law but personal trust in and devotion to Jesus and faith in the saving power of the Cross. Yet the New Israel is still the repository of the self-revelation of the One True God, as was the Israel of old, but its blessings and privileges are richly multiplied. To it there is given the forgiveness of sins through the sacrifice of the Cross and assurance of salvation through the consciousness of fellowship with God in the Holy Spirit, blessings which they of the old Covenant only saw and greeted from afar.

*Note.*—A most excellent and lucid discussion of the conception of the Church of Christ as the "New Israel" will be found in



Hamilton, *The People of God*, Vol. II. pp. 24 ff. to which I am considerably indebted in this paragraph.

## 2. *The Christian Ministry.*

The Epistle to the Philippians is of considerable value in that it seems to mark a definite stage in the development of the Christian Ministry. It is addressed to "all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons" (i. 1). In view of the official character of the address and the close connection of these titles with the Christian community at Philippi and taking into account the well defined meaning of these terms in the period immediately following that in which our Epistle was written, it seems right and natural to translate the Greek words as we have done and to regard them as referring to officers holding a recognised position in the Church and not to mere functions performed in that Church, as would be the case if we rendered the phrase "the ministers of the Church and their assistants" as is done in some translations. (Cf. *The New Testament in Modern Speech*.) In the Pastoral Epistles the terms "bishops" and "deacons" are unquestionably the official titles of Church ministers, and, if we accept these as authentic Pauline documents, the interval which separates them from our Epistle is a very short one, at the most two or three years. It is, therefore, tolerably certain that the terms are used in a similar sense here, and if that be the case we have in our Epistle the first instance in the Pauline Epistles in which these words have a definitely official connotation. It, therefore, marks an important stage in the history of the Christian Ministry when terms, which had hitherto only described those who performed certain functions, such as "those who rule" and "those who serve", now become stereotyped official titles of these functionaries. A ministry of some kind is essential to the well-being of any organised society, and in this respect the Church stood on the same plane as every other community constituted for the mutual welfare of its members. It is only natural, therefore, to find in St Paul's Epistles that in the Churches that he founded there was a "ministry", i.e. a set of officers differentiated from the members in general, who had charge of certain affairs of the local Church in his absence, while he kept an important share of the government in his own hands. But in the earlier stages of his missionary activity the ministry was as yet in a rudimentary and

fluid state, and it is the character of the services rendered and not the official designations of the ministers themselves that is emphasised at this period.

Thus in 1 Thess. v. 12-13, probably the earliest of St Paul's Epistles, there is a distinct reference to individuals in the Church who are distinguished from the body of believers as a whole. "To know them that *labour among you* and are *over you in the Lord* and *admonish you*". Again in 1 Cor. xii. 28 and Ephes. iv. 11 we have formulated lists of those who exercise spiritual functions in the Churches, including Apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists, pastors, helps, governments, while in Rom. xii. 8 there is an exhortation to "him that ruleth", and in the preceding verse the word "ministry" is used in a general sense. There would seem to have been even at this early period a certain distinction between a higher grade of officers, those who rule and exercise government and those of a lower grade who are designated "helps". The notices in the earlier Epistles imply that there was as yet no fixed form of ministry in all the Churches and that the precise character of it varied according to the local conditions of the different communities. Now it is beyond question that early in the second century the Christian ministry consisted of three well-defined grades or orders, bishops, presbyters or priests, and deacons, and the problem before us here is to discover what particular stage in the development from the fluid, varied, and indeterminate ministry implied in the earlier Pauline Epistles to the fixed and well-defined ministry of the sub-Apostolic Church is indicated in our Epistle. It will be helpful, however, to have some knowledge of the history of the terms "bishop" and "deacon" and of the conditions which necessitated the formation of a ministry and called for the particular functions which attached to each of these offices.

(a) *Bishop*. The term itself is of Greek origin and is an Anglicised form of *ἐπίσκοπος*, a word meaning "one who has oversight". In Greek life it represented a wide variety of functions and is applied to colonial commissioners, inspectors, magistrates, and officers who superintended the finances of religious clubs and guilds. In the LXX it is used to denote taskmasters, presidents, and commissioners. Thus both in sacred and profane literature alike *ἐπίσκοπος* denotes a position of responsibility and power, and it is only natural to conclude that when the term was taken over by the Christian community it still retained the significance that attached to it in Greek circles

community, but did not necessarily hold any distinct office. Out of this body of "elders" the "bishops" or "overseers" would naturally be selected, and these would often retain the title of "elders" which they shared with the rest of the presbyterate, so that when we find the duties of the elder corresponding with those of a bishop it is the elder who has been selected for the more definite office that is implied and not the elder in his original capacity. On the other hand "elders" in Acts xiv. 23 and Titus i. 5 appear to perform definite official functions and in many other places in the Acts and Pauline Epistles something more definite seems to be demanded of them than mere membership of a class. Even those who hold the view we have mentioned acknowledge that among the elders there was a special section called "the elders who rule" which would probably represent the "bishops" met with in other parts of the New Testament. The balance of evidence is decidedly in favour of the supposition that in the New Testament at any rate "bishop" and "presbyter" are interchangeable, synonymous terms. It is possible, however, that while every bishop was a presbyter not all presbyters were bishops.

The language of the greeting in our Epistle is significant as showing the position occupied by these officials at this particular period. That the "bishops and deacons" were, or were rapidly becoming, regularly constituted officers at this time seems to be established beyond a doubt, but they were as yet of less importance than the community itself. The salutation is primarily to "the saints", and to the bishops and deacons only secondarily. They do not yet stand for the Church as they did a century later, when a letter was addressed directly to the bishop as the recognised representative of the Church concerned. Further, the use of the plural "bishops" indicates that we have not yet arrived at that stage when a single Church only possessed one bishop. In Philippi at this time a bishop was only a member of a board of bishops, but when we come to the period of the Pastoral Epistles an advance in this respect is perceptible. Here the authority and position of a bishop would seem to be independent. There is no question of others sharing his responsibility or power; the qualifications required are strictly individual, and we are well on the way towards the monarchical bishop of the second century.

There has been in recent years a considerable change of opinion as to what constituted the precise duties and functions of a bishop

and deacon in the early Church and what were the particular causes which brought about the establishment of these orders. Hatch, whose views were also adopted by Harnack, maintained that a Christian bishop was a close imitation of the analogous official in Greek circles where he was primarily concerned with financial and social matters, and more especially in connection with clubs and guilds. On this assumption it was argued that the principal functions of a bishop in the Christian Church were not strictly religious and that a bishop was appointed mainly for such duties as the care of the poor, the exercise of hospitality, and more particularly the financial oversight of the community. The reference to "bishops and deacons" in our Epistle was construed as a proof of this statement, it being taken for granted that they are mentioned here because they were specially concerned in the financial assistance that was rendered to St Paul by the Philippian Church. Hatch based his view chiefly on the evidence of Greek inscriptions which, according to him, proved clearly that "bishops" were in the main the finance officers of heathen clubs, but there is considerable hesitation among later scholars in accepting his conclusions on this point, with the result that the argument based on the supposition that a heathen bishop was a finance officer and that a Christian bishop must, therefore, partake of the same character does not now carry much weight.

A much more attractive theory, and one which seems to meet the facts of the case much more satisfactorily than that of Hatch, is the theory which attributes the institution of the Christian Ministry in all its grades to the duties necessarily associated with the celebration of the Christian Eucharist. This view is most clearly and most ably set forth by Hamilton in his recent work on *The People of God* and I propose to give a short summary of his argument. (See Vol. II. chaps. 5 and '6.)

Beginning with the history of the primitive Church of Jerusalem he argues that the appointment of the "Seven" to meet the peculiar needs of the moment confirms the supposition that later Christian officials would be called into being by the special circumstances of the Christian community. Now the one Christian institution which then separated Christians from Jews and demanded a specific official was the Eucharist. Justice was not administered in Christian courts, preaching and evangelising were the tasks of Christians as such, no leaders were required in daily worship because, being Jews as well



as Christians, the disciples worshipped in the Temple, but the Eucharistic Feast was celebrated "at home" in contrast to the public worship in the Temple and would require a presiding officer. In this president and those who assisted him we are, according to Hamilton, to recognise the beginnings of a definite Christian Ministry. In the earliest days the Apostles would preside, as they alone were present at the institution of the Sacrament and had been entrusted with it, but in process of time others would share the privilege with them or act as substitutes for them in their absence.

It is not improbable that the same course was followed in this matter as in the case of the financial problems of the Church and that certain specific persons were set aside for the work, men of age, discretion, and piety, in whom we may recognise the Christian "elders" or "presbyters", a term, but only the term, borrowed from the synagogue. Thus the custom of selecting certain individuals to preside at the Eucharist would gradually lead to the formation of a definite class to whom the function appertained and who would, as in the case of the "Seven", receive Apostolic sanction.

In the Pauline Churches we meet with "bishops", "presbyters", and "deacons". The first and second terms were no doubt borrowed from other organisations, but identity of name does not necessarily involve identity of function, and the duties performed by bishops and elders in the Christian Church did not of necessity coincide with those of the same officials in Greek or Jewish circles. The special functions of a Christian Ministry arose out of the peculiar needs of the Church at the time, and out of that Church in its corporate capacity. The possible spheres of corporate activity which would necessitate the appointment of public officials may be confined to the following.

1. Legislative and executive work.
2. Administration of finance.
3. Administration of justice and discipline.
4. Pastoral oversight.
5. Conduct of meetings for edification and prayer.
6. Conduct of meetings for the celebration of the Eucharist.

Now the Epistles to the Corinthians show that there was no legislative or executive assembly in that Church and that all matters of importance were referred to St Paul himself for decision, and also that there was no organised financial body to deal with the spending

of public money on such objects as the support of the Apostles, the relief of the sick and poor, or the expenses in connection with public meetings, or, in other words, that there was no common Church fund in the Pauline communities at the period of the Corinthian letters. Again it is quite clear that the Christians of Corinth had no judicial system of their own and that in the case of secular disputes among themselves they had recourse to the heathen courts, while offences against Christian morality were dealt with by the Church as a whole, there being no special officers entrusted with judicial and disciplinary powers. In the case of Pastoral work and meetings of a general religious character the leadership would fall into the hands of those who possessed the special charismatic gifts, the "teachers" and "prophets", and the description of such meetings in 1 Cor. xiv. 26-33 implies the absence of any presiding officer to check the proceedings. The issue is, therefore, narrowed down to the last of the possible spheres of activity, and we are led to assume that the official ministry of the Church was primarily concerned with the celebration of the Eucharist. Now the Eucharist was essentially a social and corporate institution and was celebrated in the presence of the whole Church, and yet only one person could break the bread and bless it, and this alone would create a differentiation of function—one individual would preside and would by that very act be distinguished from those who partook. The selection of such an individual would be governed by the personal character of the local Christians, and questions of personal influence and piety would enter largely into it. In some Churches there might be a class of men from whom the president was invariably chosen, while in others the choice might always be limited to one and the same person. The office did not demand any special physical or mental qualifications or even special spiritual gifts such as those connected with an Apostle or prophet, but merely that moral fitness which any Christian might possess. In the Epistle to the Philippians the officials of that Church are definitely called "bishops and deacons", and it is significant that in the Epistle of Clement (chap. 44) the same two groups of Church officers are closely connected with the Eucharist, the "bishops" who offered the gifts and who were, therefore, the presidents of the gathering and the "deacons" who assisted them. In the "Didachè" the same functions are also assigned to these two orders. Assuming that presbyters and bishops were at this period practically interchangeable terms, the one used chiefly on Jewish

soil and the other in the more definitely Gentile communities, the functions which in the New Testament are associated with the former term, such as responsibility, leadership, and representation would grow naturally out of their position as presidents at the Eucharist, and out of their personal influence. The business of the community would also gradually come into their hands, and this would account for the use of the title "bishop" as the Church came into closer contact with Greek ideas and phraseology.

The order of "deacons" was necessitated by the growth of the various Christian communities and by the call for "assistants" to help in the general discharge of the affairs of the Church as well as for the distribution of the elements at the Eucharist. The "bishops" or "elders" still retained the presidency, as no assistance was required in that capacity, and the "breaking of the bread" still remained their exclusive function.

The theory also explains the universality of this type of ministry in the Apostolic Church. The Eucharist, according to New Testament evidence, was celebrated in every Christian Church and was the one distinctive Christian service common to the Church as a whole: presidents and assistants were, therefore, a universal Christian necessity.

Dr Hamilton claims that this view gives a clear and consistent explanation both of the development of the organisation of the Churches and also of the positions which presbyters and bishops occupied in early Church life. The mention of "bishops and deacons" in the Church of Philippi somewhere about the year 60 makes it probable that the custom, which we find established towards the end of the first century, of having these two grades of officials closely connected with the Eucharist, should be traced to New Testament times, while the study of the history of the primitive Church in Jerusalem shows that in the president at the Eucharist we have the most natural cause which can be assigned for the origin of the presbyterate.

## XII. ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE.

## I. Introduction. i. 1-11.

(a) The Address. 1-2.

(b) Thanksgiving and prayer for the Philippians. 3-11.

1. Thanksgiving for their co-operation in the work of the Gospel in the past and in the present and for the Apostle's confident assurance, based on his personal knowledge and experience of them, that God will in the future complete the good work that He has inaugurated in them. 3-7.
2. A prayer that their love may increase and issue in higher spiritual knowledge and discernment and that they may be filled with the fruits of righteousness unto the glory and praise of God. 8-11.

## II. An account of his own personal situation in Rome and of the progress of Christianity in that city. i. 12-26.

(a) The preliminary stages of his trial have exercised a stimulating influence upon Christian life generally in Rome and have had the effect of making himself and the cause he stands for well known in Imperial circles and more particularly among the Praetorian Guard. 12-13.

(b) The Christians in Rome, who had been inspired through his trial with fresh zeal and renewed courage, are, however, not all imbued with the same pure and unselfish motives. Many of them are loyal to him and to his Gospel, but there is a section which is actuated by ill-will towards himself and which preaches "Christ of envy and strife". Yet because it is Christ that is preached he rejoices in that fact. 14-18.

(c) His own hopes and fears. The result of the trial is uncertain. It may end in freedom or it may end in death, and it is difficult to decide which is the more desirable. His own instinctive conviction is that he will be released, because his presence and guidance are so urgently demanded by the needs of the Churches. 19-26.



## III. The main hortatory section of the Epistle. i. 27–ii. 18.

- (a) An exhortation to unity and forgetfulness of self. i. 27–ii. 4.
- (b) An appeal to Christ as the crowning example of humility and self-surrender and as illustrating the principle that the way of humiliation is the path to glory. 5–11.
- (c) A further exhortation, based on the preceding appeal, to obedience, earnest and anxious spiritual effort, and mutual peace, so that the Apostle may receive the due reward of his labour in the day of Christ. 12–16.
- (d) St Paul contemplates the possibility that his end may be near, but come life, come death, he will rejoice and the Philippians are to rejoice with him. 17–18.

## IV. The Apostle's plans for the future. ii. 19–30.

- (a) The proposed visit to Philippi of Timothy, who receives the Apostle's highest commendation in view of his zeal and perfect loyalty to himself, and a possible visit in the near future from St Paul himself. 19–24.
- (b) The contemplated return of Epaphroditus to his native city, and an account of his illness and recovery and of the services rendered by him to the Apostle. 25–30.

## V. St Paul is now approaching the closing stages of his letter and once again sounds the call "to rejoice". iii. 1 a.

## VI. At this point there is a sudden break in the sequence, and the Apostle's attention is diverted for the moment from the main purpose of the letter, so that the remainder of the chapter is devoted to grave and strongly worded warnings against two sets of opponents, Jews, who were probably to be found in Rome, and Gentile Christians in Philippi. iii. 1 b–21.

## 1. A warning against Jews. 1 b–11.

- (a) A protest against Jewish pride and exclusiveness. 1 b–6, leading to
- (b) A defence of the Christian position as illustrated by his own experience and more especially by his conversion, which involved a complete surrender of his privileges

as a son of the covenant and the abandonment of the "righteousness which is of the law", 7-9, and made him the recipient of the "righteousness which is of God by faith", which issued in the knowledge of Christ and of the power of His resurrection, conformity with His death, and the hope of a final triumph in "the resurrection from the dead". 10-11.

2. A warning against the "spiritual" party in the Philippian Church, which was divided into two sections. 12-21.

(a) Those who were given to undue spiritual presumption and a false assurance of perfection. The lesson is pressed home by an appeal to his own spiritual strivings and gradual progress in Christ. 12-16.

(b) Those who in virtue of their claims to "spirituality" affected to despise the body and its passions and in consequence fell into pagan immorality. 17-19.

(c) The incompatibility of this sensual life with the position of Christians as a colony of heaven, whose Saviour is in heaven, and with the future glory awaiting the body. 20-21.

- VII. 1. At this point the main thread of the letter, interrupted at iii. 1 b, is again resumed in an impressive exhortation to steadfastness and unity, which is particularly addressed to certain women in the Philippian Church. iv. 1-3.

2. A general exhortation to the Church as a whole to display a spirit of joyfulness, considerateness, and trust in God, closing with a benediction. 4-7.

3. The exhortation is resumed, but with special reference to moral excellence and beauty generally and with strong emphasis upon definite Christian qualities as exhibited in the Apostle's own person and life. 8-9.

- VIII. The Apostle now enters upon what is the chief practical purpose of the letter, viz. to express his gratitude to the Philippian Church for its generosity towards himself. iv. 10-20.

(a) A recognition of the unfailing goodwill of the Philip-  
pians towards himself and of the fact that this had been

prevented from taking practical form earlier in his imprisonment by the lack of opportunity only. 10.

(b) An assertion of his own independence of material conditions because of his complete dependence upon the power of Christ within him. 11-13,

which is, nevertheless, coupled with

(c) a grateful acknowledgment of their kind thought for him on this as well as on previous occasions, and with the invocation of the rich blessings of God upon them. 14-19.

(d) A doxology. 20.

IX. Final salutations and benediction. iv. 21-23.

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# THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

## CHAPTER I

### I. INTRODUCTION, 1—11

#### (a) *The Address*, 1—2

**I.** 1 PAUL and Timothy, <sup>1</sup>servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the 2 <sup>2</sup>bishops and deacons : Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Gr. *bondservants*.

<sup>2</sup> Or, *overseers*

*Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, devoted to him soul and body, to all at Philippi who are consecrated to God by their faith in and union with the same Christ Jesus, together with the ministers of the Church, the bishops who exercise spiritual oversight over you and the deacons who assist them in their good work. May God our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, His Son, grant unto you that grace which is God's free gift to His own and that peace one with another and with God, that tranquillity of soul which is theirs who have appropriated God's gracious gift.*

1. *Paul and Timothy.* Timothy is also associated with St Paul in the opening addresses of 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 2 Corinthians, Colossians, and Philemon. In the Epistles to the Thessalonians the inclusion of his name and that of Silvanus is more than a mere formality, and the use of the plural "we" in the body of these Epistles seems to imply that these two are regarded as joint authors with the Apostle and that the letters were issued under their

joint authority. Here, however, the mention of Timothy's name is only an act of courtesy on St Paul's part ("humanissime", Bengel) and is inserted partly because he was well known to the Philippians and was associated by them with that momentous period when the Gospel was first preached to them by the Apostle, and partly because he acted on this occasion as St Paul's amanuensis. But the singular "I" is used throughout the Epistle and the manner of

the reference to Timothy in ii. 19-22 shows that he stands outside and has neither part nor authority in the contents of the letter itself.

*servants of Christ Jesus.* Lit. "bond-servants". A study of the designations attached by St Paul to himself and his fellow signatories in the different Epistles is both instructive and interesting. The Epistles to the Thessalonians are devoid of any qualifying designation in this respect. In 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Colossians, and Ephesians he employs the official title "Apostle". In Philemon he is "the prisoner of the Lord", while in Romans he calls himself both "servant" and "Apostle". Here he and Timothy are "servants of Christ Jesus". The principle underlying the Apostle's usage in this matter would seem to be that when his Apostolic status is called in question or where false doctrine or other disturbing elements demand that his Apostolic authority should be emphasised the official title "Apostle" is deliberately employed. The use of the official title in Romans probably asserts St Paul's right to address a Church which was not of his own founding and to which he was a comparative stranger. In those cases where the above conditions did not obtain he is content with a designation which places him on a level with his readers, such as "the servant of Christ Jesus" or, as in the case of the Epistle to Philemon, with a description which is a delicate appeal for sympathy, "the prisoner of the Lord". It is significant that in all three letters addressed to the Churches of Macedonia the claim to authority finds no expression, a striking tribute to the very cordial and affectionate relations that existed

between St Paul and these Churches and to the absence of any grave disorders either in doctrine or practice. "The servant of the Lord" is a familiar Old Testament phrase and is there always associated with the great men of God and especially with the prophets. The use of this particular term might seem to imply that the Apostle is here claiming for himself and his companion a special prerogative and position as prophets and leaders of God's people, but the whole tone of the Epistle, with its repeated emphasis on humility and its touching proofs of the tender and affectionate relations existing between himself and his readers, rather favours the view that he demands nothing for himself or Timothy which he is not prepared to concede to Christians generally. The Philippians as well as the Apostle are "servants of Christ", owned by Him, dependent upon Him for all that they are and have, and willingly pledged to His service. "Bond-servant" here carries with it no thought of the forced service of the slave. The service of Christ is essentially the offering of a willing obedience, and the true implication of St Paul's idea is well expressed in the "Collect for Peace" in our "Order of Morning Prayer". "Whose service is perfect freedom" (*cui servire regnare est*).

*all.* One of the most significant features in the Epistle is the frequent use of the word "all" and its cognates. It is employed as a corrective of a tendency to disunion and jealousy in the Philippian Church as well as to mark the Apostle's affection towards every individual member of that Church.

*saints.* See Int. p. lxxxv. It is the Christian Church as the New Israel

inheriting all the privileges and conferring all the blessings and benefits associated with membership of the Chosen People that is here implied. At the same time it denotes that holiness of life and that consecration of will and purpose which are ideally associated with the name and profession of a Christian.

*bishops and deacons.* See Int. pp. lxxxviii-xcvi. These terms are used here for the first time in the New Testament as definite official titles of two grades of ministers in the Christian Church. The expression should, therefore, not be translated as if it contained only a general reference to "those that rule and those that serve" as is done by some authorities. Neither is it analogous to 1 Thess. v. 12, where the position of the article shows that the compound description "they that labour among you and are over you in the Lord" refers to one class of persons. Here it is not a single group that is in question, called "overseers" with reference to the Church and "servers" with reference to Christ, but two separate sets of officials, bishops and deacons. At the same time the place that these officials occupy in the address, coming after and not before the Church as a whole, shows that they have not yet attained the dominating position as rulers and representatives of the Churches which was theirs a few decades later. It is quite possible that the reason why they are specifically mentioned here is that they had the control of the finances of the Church and that the Apostle is anxious to recognise their services in the matter of the organisation of the gift of money sent to him by the Philippian Church.

2. The Apostle in all his letters follows the epistolary custom of the

day in the matter of the address and greeting. The latter feature, however, in the ordinary correspondence of the period was almost universally confined to the single word "greeting", as we see from letters included in the New Testament itself (cf. Acts xv. 23 : xxiii. 26) and from countless *papyrus* letters. But St Paul transforms the conventional greeting into an earnest Christian prayer and fills it with a deep Christian meaning. With a play upon the word *χαίρειν*, "greeting", it remains no longer a mere courteous expression from one person to another, but becomes *χάρις* "the grace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ", the Divine favour in all its rich possibilities. To this he adds the characteristic Hebrew salutation "Peace be with you", but this is again immeasurably enriched and lifted into the sphere of God and of Christ, so that the whole greeting becomes an epitome of all that is central and essential in the Christian religion. "May God grant unto you His grace in Christ Jesus with all its wealth of riches and that peace which the grace of God can alone create, peace with God, peace in your innermost being, peace with one another". Cf. iv. 7, 9.

*from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.* The co-ordination of "God our Father" and "the Lord Jesus Christ" is a convincing proof of the place the Divinity of our Lord held in the mind of St Paul. It is perhaps doubtful whether he anywhere specifically calls Christ God (but see Rom. ix. 5; Tit. ii. 13), yet the language of this verse and of countless others in his Epistles shows that in all the essentials of Deity Christ stood for the Apostle on the same plane as the Father. There is



perhaps a difference of function implied here. God the Father is the source of grace and peace, but they are mediated through Christ Jesus and only in union with Him can they be realised.

(b) *Thanksgiving, 3—7*

3, 4 I thank my God upon all my remembrance of you, always in every supplication of mine on behalf of you all making  
5 my supplication with joy, for your fellowship in further-  
6 ance of the gospel from the first day until now; being  
confident of this very thing, that he which began a good  
work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ :  
7 even as it is right for me to be thus minded on behalf of  
you all, because <sup>1</sup>I have you in my heart, inasmuch as,  
both in my bonds and in the defence and confirmation of  
the gospel, ye all are partakers with me of grace.

<sup>1</sup> Or, *ye have me in your heart*

*In all my thoughts of you I am led to thank my God and in every prayer of mine I pray for you all with joy, when I remember how from the very day I first preached Christ among you you have laboured unceasingly on behalf of the Gospel and have co-operated with me with true-hearted sympathy and loyalty in the service of our common Master. And my thankfulness and joy are concerned not only with your past, but I have every confidence and assurance that the future has still greater blessings in store for you and that the work begun in you long ago, a work not your own but Divine in its origin and inspiration, shall by God be brought to perfection, and that His perfect work shall be made manifest in that Day when Jesus Christ, the Judge of all, shall appear to meet and reward His own. And this confidence of mine with reference to the blessed future in store for you is based on sound reasons, partly because it is the result of prayerful meditation and earnest reflection on my part, and partly because your love and sympathy for me and your unstinted efforts on my behalf both as a prisoner and when I was on my trial have given me every right to think that you also have shared in that grace which impels me to preach Christ and to suffer for Him and has bestowed upon you the privilege of being fellow-workers and fellow-sufferers with me.*

3. *I thank my God upon all my remembrance of you.* There is a certain amount of MS. support for another reading here "I indeed thank my God for all your remembrance of me" and it is adopted by Zahn and Moffatt. But even if this

be the correct reading it affords no ground for Zahn's suggestion that the "I indeed" is emphatic and that St Paul is here removing an impression which prevailed among the Philippians that his gratitude to them for the interest they had mani-

fested in his welfare was lacking in warmth. The whole tone of the Epistle with its affectionate tenderness is proof positive that no such doubt or distrust clouded the happy relations between the Apostle and his readers. The great majority of authorities, however, accept the traditional reading as being more in accord with parallel passages in the introductory sections of other Epistles.

*my God.* Cf. Acts xxvii. 23, "the God whose I am, whom also I serve". St Paul is fond of expressing his own close personal relation with God especially in his thanksgivings and prayers. Cf. Rom. i. 8: Philemon 4, and possibly 1 Cor. i. 4.

*upon all my remembrance of you.* This expression may refer either to the occasion or to the cause of the Apostle's thanksgiving. In the one case we should translate "I thank my God whenever I think of you" and in the other "I thank my God because of my whole remembrance of you". The sense is much the same in either case. Every thought and memory associated with the Philip-pians called to mind their devoted service on behalf of the Gospel and himself, and for this he thanks God.

4. *always in every supplication of mine on behalf of you all making my supplication with joy.* It is better to take this clause as being complete in itself and not closely connected with or depending upon what precedes or what follows. It will be then a parenthetical insertion between the thanksgiving in v. 3 and its object in v. 5 and will be co-ordinate with the preceding clause, because although St Paul regarded thanksgiving as an essential component of prayer he generally seems to keep the two elements apart.

*on behalf of you all.* This may belong either to what precedes or to what follows. If we accept the rendering in the R.V. "in every supplication on behalf of you all" it will mean that whenever St Paul prayed for the Philip-pians he did so with joy. If on the other hand we translate "making my supplication with joy on behalf of you all" the Apostle meant to say that whenever he prayed the Philip-pians had a specially joyous place in his prayers.

*with joy.* At the very opening of the Epistle the Apostle strikes one of its dominant notes. Cf. Bengel, "Summa epistolae: Gaudeo, gaudeo".

5. *for your fellowship in furtherance of the gospel.* This is to be closely connected with v. 3 as explaining the ground of the Apostle's gratitude to God. At the same time the note of joy in v. 4 is also carried forward. His thankfulness and joy are both based on his remembrance of how the Philip-pians had served and suffered in the cause of Christ.

*fellowship.* Their co-operation with St Paul and with one another on behalf of the Gospel. There is perhaps also underlying the word the thought which is ever present in the Apostle's mind of their "fellowship" in the Spirit of Jesus Christ which was the inspiration of their zeal and the bond of their united service. The reference should not be confined to the gift that the Apostle had received from the Philip-pians. It was for the Christian services of the Philip-pians in their manifold forms that St Paul praised God, and not merely for their bounty to him personally, although this may well have been included in the expression, as he was in the habit of regarding material contributions of

this character as an offering to God and a substantial service to the cause of Christianity. Cf. 2 Cor. ix. 12, 13, where the "collection for the saints" is described in terms which imply its deep spiritual significance, and iv. 18 in this Epistle where the very gift we have alluded to is spoken of as "an odour of sweet savour, a sacrifice, acceptable, well pleasing to God".

6. *being confident of this very thing.* A further reason for his thanksgiving and joy. It is not only the thought of the Philippians' services in the past that filled the Apostle's heart with gratitude; the omens for the future are equally favourable. Cf. Bengel, "Initium est pignus consummationis" ("The beginning is the earnest of the end").

*that he which began a good work in you will perfect it.*

*began, perfect.* These two words are found closely connected in pagan religious language and signify the beginning and the closing of the sacrificial rites. They are also used in the "Mystery Religions" to denote the early and final stages of the process of the initiation of the mystic. St Paul may here and in Gal. iii. 3, where the two words are also found together, be borrowing language which was familiar to his readers who had been formerly associated with pagan religious cults in order to express the ideas of the progress, growth, and final consummation of God's work in the soul of the Christian, but the words are also used in an approximate sense in the LXX and in the writings of Hellenistic Jews like Philo.

There is a ring of certainty in St Paul's language here which is very significant. He is persuaded that in the Christian life the end is contemplated in the initial stages.

This confidence of his is based on three grounds. 1. The unalterable plan and purpose of God and the unchanging love of Him who has the end in view from the beginning. 2. The principle of life in Christ which carries with it the idea of growth and permanence. The entrance of Christ into the soul was an abiding presence, an indwelling which nothing could vitally disturb, the beginning of a fellowship which was eternal. 3. A day would dawn when Christ's work would be exhibited in all its fulness, and when the spiritual harvest would be reaped, a day made blessed and glorious by the perfection of His work in His redeemed. (See *Expository Times*, xxv. p. 344.)

*a good work, "the good work",* i.e. the work of this fellowship, but perhaps including the thought of the new creation in Christ Jesus, the renovation of the whole nature of man by the indwelling Spirit of God.

*until the day of Jesus Christ,* involving the idea of testing and of glory. "The day of Jesus Christ" shall test whether the process of spiritual growth has been consummated and shall also manifest the joy and glory of Christ because of the harvest reaped and the work completed.

7. *even as it is right for me,* "for me" is emphatic and means "for me above all else".

*as it is right.* The meaning of "right" here is probably the same as in Col. iv. 1 "Masters render unto your servants that which is *their due right*", a sense of *δικαιον* which is very frequent in the *papyri* and more especially in the concluding formulae of petitions. (Moulton and Milligan, s.v.) St Paul, therefore, says here, "It is only your due that



I should be persuaded of your glorious future”.

*be thus minded.* Souter translates *φρονεῖν* “to have in my mind, to set my mind upon, suggesting moral interest, thought and study, and not a mere unreflecting opinion”. So the Apostle implies that he has reached the confident conclusion formulated in the previous verse after earnest and careful consideration of what God had done for them in the past and of their splendid response to God’s efforts. “The *φρονεῖν* of the Philippians for him (iv. 10) is answered by a *φρονεῖν* of him for them which has to be of a different kind; he cannot and need not send them money in return, but he can cherish great and good hopes of their religious prospects”. (Moffatt, *Expositor*, VIII. xii. p. 340.)

*because I have you in my heart.* The context seems to demand for this phrase a connection not so much with the heart as the seat of affection but rather as the seat of reflection. This use of the word may be illustrated by St Luke, i. 66, “All that heard them laid them up in their heart”, and Acts v. 4, “How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart?” Accepting this meaning the expression then becomes a stronger affirmation of the preceding clause “be thus minded”. The Apostle’s confidence is the result of his deepest reflection upon the meaning and outcome of the Christian life lived by the Philippians. It is possible to translate “because ye have me in your heart” as is done in the Margin of the R. V., but as St Paul is concerned throughout with his own impressions of the Philippian Church and its progress in Christ the former rendering is preferable.

*inasmuch as, both in my bonds and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel.* There is a considerable difference of opinion as to whether St Paul has in mind here his general vindication of the Gospel as its representative in Rome or whether the reference is definitely confined to his trial and defence before the Imperial Court. Those who with Lightfoot place the Epistle early in the imprisonment, or with Ramsay deny that the Apostle was brought to trial at the end of the two years’ residence in his hired dwelling, naturally plead for the former view. The theory adopted in this Commentary that the Epistle was written after the preliminary stages of the trial had taken place (see Int. p. xxxviii) is based very largely on the supposition that there is a definite allusion to the trial in this passage. This view is confirmed by the use of the word *βεβαίωσις* (confirmation) in the LXX (Lev. xxv. 23), in the New Testament (Heb. vi. 16, where it means a “legal guarantee”), and also in the *papyri* where it always seems to have the technical forensic sense in mind. (Moulton and Milligan, s.v.; Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, p. 104.)

*ye all are partakers with me of grace.* Cf. 1 Cor. xv. 10, “By the grace of God I am what I am”. Grace here covers all that St Paul values in his Christian life, all that he had become by the grace of God. The term is not to be confined to any special type or manifestation of grace such as the “grace of apostleship” or even of the privilege of suffering on behalf of Christ. Moffatt’s translation brings out its meaning admirably “how you all share with me in the *grace divine*”.



*St Paul's Prayer for the Philippian Church, 8—11*

8 For God is my witness, how I long after you all in the  
9 tender mercies of Christ Jesus. And this I pray, that your  
love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all  
10 discernment; so that ye may <sup>1</sup>approve the things that are  
excellent; that ye may be sincere and void of offence  
11 unto the day of Christ; being filled with the <sup>2</sup>fruits of  
righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ, unto the  
glory and praise of God.

<sup>1</sup> Or, prove the things that differ

<sup>2</sup> Gr. fruit.

*And if any witness is needed to the depth of my affection for you God Himself can testify how I yearn for communion with you, in body and soul, with a tenderness inspired by Jesus Christ Himself. I have already told you how unceasingly I pray for you (v. 4), and it will comfort you to know what it is that I ask God on your behalf. I pray that your love, love for Christ, love for the brethren, love for me, may so grow and develop as to create in you that knowledge which will enable you to have a grasp of Christian principles, teach you how to apply them in your relations with one another and with the world around you, and give you a sense of what, among conflicting ideals and interests, is vital. I also pray that in your daily life you may set an example of transparent honesty and that you hurt or harm nobody, so that all through your Christian course and at the great Day you may stand the test of Christ. Finally I pray that your life may be fruitful and become rich in every Christian grace and virtue and that all that you do may be for the glory and praise of God the Father.*

8. *For God is my witness.* Cf. Gal. i. 20: 2 Cor. i. 23. This expression is in St Paul a mark of intense personal emotion, and in the two instances quoted above is employed to add force to an indignant denial of an implied charge against him on the part of his opponents. Here, however, the spirit of the passage is entirely different, and the calling of God to witness is the Apostle's way of emphasising his consuming love for his converts. "Only God can tell how deep is my affection for you".

*how I long after you all in the tender mercies of Christ Jesus.*

Cf. iv. 1, "my brethren, beloved and longed for". The Apostle identifies himself so closely with Christ that it is the Master's own tenderness that is manifested in his own intense longing for the presence and fellowship of his beloved Philippians.

9. *And this I pray.* See special note on "St Paul's prayers". Here he prays that Christian love in all its breadth and possibilities may grow and put forth its finest bloom, so that it may produce *knowledge and all discernment*. The Greek word for *knowledge* seems to denote knowledge directed towards a particular

object, and the direction implied is explained by the following term *discernment*, which is knowledge issuing in moral tact and the power to choose aright.

10. *approve the things that are excellent.* This is the central aim of St Paul's prayer for the Philippian Church. The phrase is ambiguous but it means at least "to test things that differ" (see Margin, R.V.), to draw a line between good and evil, between truth and falsehood, and implies the conduct of "full grown men, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil" (Heb. v. 14). But it has a still deeper meaning, "to test the things that surpass, that are excellent", the power to discern *τίνα μὲν καλά, τίνα δὲ κρείττονα* (Theodoret), to choose "ex bonis optima" (Bengel), to have an ear for true notes, an eye for excellence, a keen spiritual vision. St Paul may be giving us an indication of what he means by "things that are excellent" in iv. 8, "whatsoever things are true, ... honourable, ... just, ... pure, lovely, of good report". The verb also includes the thought not only of "testing" but of "approving". The Philippians were not simply to examine but to class, to put their stamp upon, to pass on from judgment into action.

The "*things that are excellent*" are partly intellectual, such as judgments in theory, the deepest truth, the view most true to fact, most founded on reason, most faithful to the past and the future; and partly, practical activities, the best course to pursue, the most tactful means of guiding, teaching, building up. There is evidence that the Greek expression was used in the sense of "what is essential", which is the

meaning adopted by Moffatt in his translation of Rom. ii. 18 and of this passage, "having a sense of what is vital in religion" which sums up admirably all that the phrase includes.

The phrase gave the keynote to William Watson's Poem, "The Things that are more Excellent", of which one verse may be quoted:

The grace of friendship—mind and heart

Linked with their fellow heart and mind;

The gains of science, gifts of art,

The sense of oneness with our kind;

The thirst to know and understand—

A large and liberal discontent:

These are the goods in life's rich hand,

The things that are more Excellent.

*sincere.* The Greek is equivalent to the Latin *sincerus*. Its meaning here may be explained possibly by St James, i. 27, "unspotted from the world", i.e. uncontaminated by the pagan atmosphere in which the Philippians are compelled to live. Another, and perhaps a better, rendering would be, "perfect honesty and openness of character in their relation to God and man".

*void of offence.* This may be taken actively or passively and may mean either "not stumbling yourselves" or "not causing others to stumble". As the passage as a whole seems to have in view their attitude towards others the passive "giving no offence to others" and hence "blameless", a meaning which the word has frequently in the *papyri*, gives the better sense here. This is clearly the meaning of the synonym in Rom. xiv. 13 and of the identical word in 1 Cor. x. 32. The thought is illustrated by 1 Cor. viii. 13. The word used here is not a purely Biblical word as was thought until recently, but is often

found in contemporary secular literature and inscriptions.

*unto the day of Christ.* The preposition "unto" has the sense of "in view of", "keeping your eyes in the direction of". Hence we may paraphrase, "Ever remembering the day of Christ which will test the character of your Christian life and reward your perseverance".

11. *being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are through*

*Jesus Christ.* Cf. Amos vi. 12. These may be either (1) the fruits produced by the consciousness of the favour of God justifying the sinner or (2) the fruits which consist in righteousness, i.e. a sanctified Christian life. The Greek here and in Gal. v. 22 is singular, "fruit", denoting that there is a unity among all its manifestations.

*unto the glory and praise of God.*

This is in St Paul the aim and end of all Christian grace and effort.

### *St Paul's Prayers*

There are few things in St Paul's Epistles which repay study better than the Apostle's prayers which are found in every letter of his, with the single exception of that to the Galatians, and even that, with all its storms and tempests, closes on the note of prayer: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen".

Conventional formulae of thanksgiving and prayer were common enough in the letters of the period, and occasionally we meet with expressions in them which betray no small amount of religious feeling. A soldier writes to his father, "I thank the Lord Serapis that when I was in peril in the sea he saved me immediately", and a prodigal son writes to his mother, "I make supplications for thee daily before the Lord Serapis" (*Papyrus* letters found in the Fayûm in Egypt, belonging to the 2nd century A.D.). But it is only the framework that the Apostle has borrowed from the ordinary letter of his time. In spirit and content his thanksgiving and prayer belong to a different world, and all trace of conventionality and mere social courtesy has disappeared. St Paul's epistolary prayers are prayers in the fullest sense, combining the recognition of the presence and goodness of God and of the unceasing need of His help with the most fervent desire for the spiritual growth and the eternal salvation of his converts. They are not private prayers concerned simply with his own personal welfare, but are essentially "Prayers for the Churches".

Following the model in the conventional letter the Pauline prayer invariably opens with a thanksgiving to Almighty God for all that the Church in question has achieved in Christ in the past, and this is followed by a prayer in the more exact sense of the term, that God may complete the good work and bring it to maturity. In the earlier Epistles the prayers are comparatively simple in language and conception, as e.g. 2 Thess. i. 11-12, "We pray always for you, that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfil every desire of goodness and every work of faith, with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and ye in Him", but when we come to the letters of the Captivity we find that the prayers far excel anything that the letters contain in wealth of language, in loftiness of idea, and in exaltation of spirit. Ephes. i. 3-23 and Col. i. 9-23 are striking examples



of the spiritual heights to which St Paul could attain in prayer. He seems to lose himself completely in the contemplation of the rich blessings already bestowed upon the Ephesian Church and of the still higher glories which are in store for the faithful and redeemed. He is so overpowered by the vision of glory which unfolds itself before him that he insensibly glides into an enraptured soliloquy, so that it becomes difficult to determine where the prayer, properly so called, ends and the passionate and inspired declamation of doctrine begins. The most characteristic feature of the Apostle's prayers in every one of the Epistles of the Captivity is the petition that his readers may be granted *knowledge*. Cf. Ephes. i. 17, "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the *knowledge* of Him".

Col. i. 9, "that ye may be filled with the *knowledge* of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding".

Philemon 6, "that the fellowship of thy faith may become effectual in the *knowledge* of every good thing which is in you, unto Christ".

Phil. i. 9, "that your love may abound yet more and more in *knowledge* and all discernment".

The possession of spiritual truth is for St Paul the root of all Christian life and progress, the indispensable condition of all morality and right thinking. In this matter he is in complete accord with our Lord's teaching concerning the function of the Holy Spirit as recorded in St John's Gospel, "The Spirit of truth shall lead you into all truth". In our Epistle, however, love, love of Christ and love of the brethren, is placed even before knowledge, and knowledge is declared to be the product of love. Here the Apostle is following the line of his own experience and indeed that of every sincere follower of Christ. It is the realisation of the love of Christ that is the first step in the path which leads to union with Christ and final redemption in Him. Love begets knowledge of its Divine object and of His will, a knowledge that grows and expands in exact proportion to the closeness of the intimacy between the soul and its Beloved. So St Paul prays that the Philippians may be filled with a love which is ever on the increase, so that it may create in them such spiritual knowledge as will give them the sense to perceive what is supreme and vital in their religion, an absolute transparency of spirit and purpose, a gentleness that will neither hurt nor harm, and a Christian life rich in a harvest of right living. Thus shall they accomplish the will and purpose of God for them and live only for His glory and praise.

## II. A NARRATIVE OF HIS OWN PERSONAL SITUATION AT ROME AND OF THE PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY IN THAT CITY

(a) *The effect of his presence and trial upon the progress of Christianity in Rome generally, 12—13*

12 Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me have fallen out rather unto the



13 progress of the gospel ; so that my bonds became manifest in Christ <sup>1</sup>throughout the whole prætorian guard, and to all the rest.

<sup>1</sup> Gr. *in the whole Prætorium.*

*Now with reference to my own situation and affairs, which have been apparently the cause of some anxiety to you, let me inform you that your apprehensions are groundless and that my presence in Rome has exercised a favourable influence upon the progress of the Gospel in the Imperial City. My imprisonment, which like all else in my life is endured for Christ's sake and has its meaning in Christ, has become a familiar topic throughout the whole Prætorian guard and in other wide and important circles in Rome.*

(With the whole paragraph cf. Ephes. chap. iii, especially c. 13, and Col. i. 24—29, which show how anxious and perplexed St Paul's Churches were on account of his imprisonment.)

12. *Now I would have you know, brethren.* A formula which is very common in the letters of the period. Cf. "I would have you know that I did not expect you to go up to the metropolis", in a *papyrus* letter from the Fayûm, 2nd century A.D.

*rather*, in contrast to the fears entertained by the Philippians.

*progress.* The Greek word is a military term denoting the work of pioneers clearing the country in front of an army on the march. Hence it comes to mean the result of such labours—an advance, progress.

13. *so that my bonds became manifest in Christ.* This passage is generally interpreted as if it read "so that my bonds became manifest that they are in Christ", i.e. "it is now recognised that I am in prison because of my religion and not because I am a criminal in the ordinary sense of the term". There are several weighty objections to this interpretation. First of all the grammar of the passage is decidedly opposed to it, and it is difficult to see how this particular meaning can be extracted from the actual words used by

St Paul. Then again it is exceedingly doubtful whether the profession of Christianity as such was at this time regarded as an offence against Roman law. The evidence of the Acts seems to show that Roman officials in the provinces refused to accept the Apostle's religious views as constituting a serious charge against him, and the grave offence of which he was accused was that of being a disturber of the public peace. Finally there seems to be no valid reason why the expression "in Christ" should have a meaning here which is different from what it bears universally in the Pauline Epistles. If we connect "in Christ" with the verb, we have a perfectly intelligible sentence, whose meaning is quite in accord with the Apostle's use of this particular expression in all other contexts. "It is Christ that has transformed my imprisonment, so that far from being a hindrance to me or to the progress of the Gospel it has become a great and wide-reaching influence in Rome. Bound though I am, His power and grace have enabled me to bear strong and

telling witness for Him, and my very humiliation has 'in Him' become a manifestation of His grace and glory".

*throughout the whole Prætorian guard.* The Latin word "Prætorium" has throughout the whole course of its history been used to denote both places and persons. It originally meant the prætor's tent in camp and then came to be used for the military council that assembled in that officer's tent. The local sense was further extended to cover the official residence of the governor of a province, and the word eventually came to mean any kind of princely or Imperial residence, or even a large country house. In regard to persons it was employed to designate the Imperial Body-guard, or the supreme Imperial Court which met under the presidency of the *Præfecti Prætorio*. In the New Testament the word is frequently used in the narrative of our Lord's trial for the residence of the Roman Governor in Jerusalem and in Acts xxiii. 35 of the same official's residence in Caesarea. There is no defining clause attached to the term in our text, and the exact meaning of the phrase "in the whole Prætorium" is much disputed. Many authorities support a local sense, as if it referred to the Prætorian Camp outside the walls of Rome, close to the Porta Viminalis or to the Prætorian Barracks on the Palatine, and suppose that the Apostle had been removed from his "hired dwelling" and was now in close custody in Camp or Barracks. But there is no evidence to show that the term was

used to denote either of these localities, or the Imperial Palace in Rome. A local meaning to the term appears, therefore, to be inadmissible, and our choice seems to lie between the Prætorian Guard and the officials of the Imperial High Court. Mommsen was a strong advocate of the second view and was at one time followed by Ramsay. The latter has, however, recently abandoned this opinion, because he has become converted to the theory that the Apostle was not brought to trial at this stage but was released owing to the non-appearance of the witnesses from Judaea and now favours the interpretation in the R.V. which is also in my opinion the correct one. (See Ramsay, in *Expositor*, VIII. v. p. 267.) The Apostolic prisoner had become a familiar personage throughout the whole of the Imperial Guard because he was in their custody, and the fact that he was watched by an endless succession of soldiers for two whole years would have brought him into contact with most of the members of that body. Moule in his *Philippian Studies* has an instructive note on the character and conduct of him who could create such a universally favourable opinion among the Prætorians. "It must have been a course of *unbroken* consistency of conduct as well as of openness of witness. Had he only sometimes, only rarely, only once or twice, failed in patience, in kindness, in the great dignity of the Gospel, the whole succession of his keepers would have felt the effect as the story passed from one to the other".

(b) *The effect of his imprisonment upon the Roman Church,*  
14—17

14 And that most of the brethren in the Lord, <sup>1</sup>being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to  
15 speak the word of God without fear. Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife ; and some also of good will :  
16 the one *do it* of love, knowing that I am set for the defence  
17 of the gospel : but the other proclaim Christ of faction, not sincerely, thinking to raise up affliction for me in my bonds.

<sup>1</sup> Gr. *trusting in my bonds.*

*Within the Roman Church itself my imprisonment and trial have been the means of inciting the majority of the brethren to greater boldness and courage in proclaiming fearlessly the word of God, being assured that the Lord who has protected me will not fail them. But while all these are inspired by the same confidence and courage they are not all animated by the same pure motives. There is a section among them whose purpose in preaching Christ is to engender faction and strife. Many of them, however, are in loyal sympathy with me and with my ideas and are filled with true affection for me, realising the significance and object of my mission, that I am appointed by the Great Captain for the defence of the Gospel. The others that I alluded to proclaim Christ in order to further their own personal ambitions and those of the party they lead, hoping also that by doing this they will make my imprisonment harder to bear.*

14. *most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds. In the Lord.* It is better to connect these words with "confident" and not with "brethren" as in the R.V., because "brethren" already involves being "in the Lord". It is true that there are instances in the Pauline Epistles where the words "brother" and "brethren" are further explained by the addition of this or an analogous expression as e.g. Col. i. 2, "the faithful brethren in Christ", and Col. iv. 7, "beloved brother in the Lord", but the presence of the defining clause is in both cases due to the adjective. It is the "brethren who are *faithful* in Christ" and the "brother *beloved* in the Lord" that are in question in these two instances,

and the simple phrase "brother in the Lord" is never found in St Paul. The Apostle's imprisonment had been the means of encouraging the majority of Roman Christians to greater activity and boldness on behalf of Christ, so that, strong in the assurance that the Lord who had protected the Apostle would also protect them, they preached Christ without fear.

*are more abundantly bold.* This implies that the Roman Church as a whole was already active and zealous before the Apostle's arrival in the city. His presence among them had only awakened to a more vigorous life a confidence in God's protection and a boldness of utterance which already existed to some degree. On his coming to Rome St Paul had thanked

God and taken courage at the sight of them (Acts xxviii. 15). Now they thank God and take courage at the sight of him and his patient confidence.

15. *Some... some...* It is a moot question whether the two parties designated here are the "majority" and "minority" of the preceding verse, or whether the Apostle is entering upon a new classification by subdividing the active and zealous majority. It is more natural to suppose that he preserves the subject of the previous verse and has still in his mind the energetic section of the Church and then proceeds to differentiate between its two wings, the one inspired by goodwill towards himself and the other by selfishness and jealousy. There is a slight difficulty perhaps in understanding how the Apostle could describe the second wing as "being confident in the Lord through my bonds", yet it is not impossible to realise how the comparatively favourable progress of his trial might inspire even those who were not too well disposed towards him with the conviction that preaching Christ was after all not such a perilous proceeding as it appeared to be and so encourage them "to speak the word of God without fear".

*of envy and strife.* For the identity and motives of the party implied here see Int. pp. lv-lvii.

*of goodwill.* Goodwill towards the Apostle personally and towards the progress of the Gospel generally.

16-17. *The one do it of love, ... the other proclaim Christ of faction.* Some authorities translate these expressions "the party of love" and "the party of faction", but it is better on the whole to attach "of love" and "of faction" to the verb

"proclaim Christ", as explaining the motives which animated the respective parties.

*of love.* Like "goodwill", love of St Paul and love of the Gospel.

*of faction.* The subjective noun corresponding to this word, *ὁ ἐριθός*, is used by Homer of one who hires out his labour. In Aristotle's *Politics* it describes candidates in an election who by bribery and other devious means created a following. Hence it came to be employed not only of the method of gaining followers but also of the act, which explains the meaning the word seems to have in Rom. ii. 8, 2 Cor. xii. 20, viz. *ambition*. It is the ambition of rival leaders who create parties for egotistical purposes and to serve their own ends that appears to be expressed by the term, and it is, therefore, the leaders of the party that was hostile to himself rather than their followers who are condemned here by the Apostle. (See Hort on St James iii. 14.)

*knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.* This explains the goodwill and love of the party friendly to himself. They recognised the true significance of the Apostle's mission and imprisonment and saw in them the Lord's purpose and the Lord's protection.

*I am set*, like a soldier posted on guard by his captain.

*not sincerely.* With mixed and impure motives. The opposite perhaps of what the Apostle prays may be granted to the Philippians in i. 10.

*thinking.* The word in later Greek conveys the idea of "thinking with a purpose", so that we may translate here, "purposing to raise up affliction for me in my bonds", to make my imprisonment burdensome and harder to bear.



*His own hopes and fears, 18-20*

18 What then? only that in every way, whether in pretence  
 or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and therein I rejoice, yea,  
 19 and will rejoice. For I know that this shall turn to my  
 salvation, through your supplication and the supply of the  
 20 Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation  
 and hope, that in nothing shall I be put to shame, but *that*  
 with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be  
 magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death.

*Well, let them work in this spirit and with this motive. The one important matter is that Christ is being preached and not whether the preaching is entirely in accord with my ideas and predilections. Therefore because Christ is being preached I rejoice in the fact, aye, and will go on rejoicing. And I have reason to rejoice because I know that my present situation will have its outcome in my highest spiritual welfare and perhaps in my release from bonds. In any case it will form a pathway for me to the glories of Heaven, aided as I am by your prayers for me and by the grace of the Holy Spirit so freely bestowed upon me in Christ. I, therefore, cherish the passionate hope that in the part I have to play I may exhibit no shrinking from pain or peril which will bring shame on myself, but that on the contrary I may now, as all through my Christian career, glorify Christ with all boldness and freedom of speech in this body which I have dedicated to His service, whether I live or whether I die.*

18. *What then?* "What am I to say concerning this preaching of theirs, what judgment am I to pass on their motives and conduct?"

*only that.* "The one thing that matters is not my personal feeling or comfort, not whether Christ is being preached exactly in accordance with my ideas of fitness, but that Christ is being preached".

*in pretence or in truth.* Cf. Moffatt, "for ulterior motives or honestly".

*and therein I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.* There is another punctuation of this sentence which is adopted by Westcott and Hort, who place a full stop after the first "rejoice" and a comma after the second, thus connecting the latter half of the sentence with what follows. The passage

would then read, "and therein I rejoice. Yea, and will rejoice because I know...". If we accept the punctuation in the R.V. the second clause becomes an echo or affirmation of the first, or it may be a simple aside in the process of dictating. For St Paul's charity and breadth of mind as illustrated here, see Int. p. lvii.

19. *this.* The situation generally as described in 12-17. His bonds, the activity of the Roman Church, the goodwill and loyalty of his own friends, the jealousy and selfseeking of his opponents are joys and trials which through the intercession of the Philippian Church and the comfort of the Holy Spirit shall be transmuted into graces and blessings which will advance his spiritual life and lead to a final victory in Christ.

*my salvation.* Not merely a verdict of acquittal in the Supreme Court and a consequent release from prison, although this may well be included in the thought, but "salvation" in its widest sense. The narrower reference is ruled out by the emphasis upon "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" as one of the causes contributing to this salvation, which can hardly, therefore, imply that of the body only. It is also better to give the term its customary sense in the Pauline Epistles unless there are overwhelming reasons to the contrary, which is not the case here.

*supply.* The verb corresponding

to this noun is used in the *papyri* in a way which implies the "generous" connotation underlying the word here. Cf. this extract from a *papyrus* letter. "I for my part *provided* for my wife in a measure that exceeded my resources" (Moulton and Milligan, s.v.).

*the supply of the Spirit.* This expression may denote either "the rich endowment which the Spirit supplies" where "the Spirit" is the giver, or "the rich endowment which consists in the supply of the Spirit", where "the Spirit" is the gift. It is possible that the Apostle was thinking of "the Spirit of Jesus Christ" as both giver and gift.

### *The Holy Spirit in the Epistle*

The references to the Divine Spirit in our Epistle are comparatively rare, and are confined to four verses. Of these, three point unquestionably to the Holy Spirit, viz. i. 19, "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ"; ii. 1, "the fellowship of the Spirit"; and iii. 3, "who worship by the Spirit of God", but the fourth, i. 27, "stand fast in one spirit", is probably to be interpreted of the human spirit as it responds to the Divine Spirit, although it would be too much to say that the Holy Spirit cannot possibly be in view here. The lack of uniformity in the designations of the Spirit in this Epistle as e.g. "the Spirit of Jesus Christ", "the Spirit of God" is characteristic of the Pauline Epistles generally. Thus in one passage, Rom. viii. 9-11, the Spirit is successively termed "the Spirit of God", "the Spirit of Christ", "the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead", and "the Spirit that dwelleth in you". The relation between Christ and the Spirit in St Paul's mind has been the source of considerable discussion. His language in such passages as 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18, where the following expressions are found "the Lord is the Spirit", "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty", "even as from the Lord the Spirit" seems to amount to an absolute identification of the two. Further, throughout the Epistles the same activities are associated with the Spirit as are predicated of the indwelling Christ. The new life is in Christ and in the Spirit (2 Cor. v. 17: Rom. xiv. 17). Christ and the Spirit dwell in the Christian (Gal. ii. 20: Rom. viii. 10: Rom. viii. 9, 11), and in the Church (1 Cor. xii. 27: 1 Cor. iii. 16). Both Son and Spirit intercede for the believer (Rom. viii. 34: Rom. viii. 26) and are the agents of his adoption (Ephes. i. 5: Gal. iv. 6). The moral life is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. v. 22) and is at the same time the fruit of righteousness which is through Christ (Phil. i. 11). This list might be extended almost indefinitely so as to include practically every gift, grace,

and power of the Christian life, all of which are regarded by St Paul as being indifferently within the province of Christ or of the Spirit. The identification has seemed so complete that some authorities strongly urge that for the Apostle Jesus Christ was the Spirit and that in his conception of the Godhead there were two and not three Divine Persons. And yet an equal amount of evidence might be cited to show that while the connection between Christ and the Spirit was of the most intimate character possible the distinction between them is clearly and definitely maintained by St Paul. Thus in Rom. viii. 10, 11 while the same functions are attributed to both they yet stand apart and side by side, and this is also true of passages like Rom. xv. 16, 30: 1 Cor. vi. 11: 2 Cor. i. 21, 22: Ephes. i. 17. God, the Lord, and the Spirit are definitely separated in Rom. i. 1-14: 1 Cor. xii. 4-6: 2 Thess. ii. 13, and more particularly in the Apostolic benediction in 2 Cor. xiii. 14. There is one significant feature to be noticed in regard to the interchange of names and functions between Christ and the Spirit in St Paul, viz., that it is always the risen and exalted Christ and never the earthly Jesus that is equated with the Spirit, and this is probably the clue to his doctrine of the Holy Spirit. It was in some way a blending of the doctrine of the Spirit which he had inherited from the Old Testament and found in the primitive Christian Church and his own spiritual experience in Christ. The earliest Christians regarded the Holy Spirit bestowed upon them at Pentecost as the source of their wonder-working gifts and powers, but to the Apostle, at any rate primarily, the new life was the result of his personal knowledge and acceptance of the Risen Christ and of His indwelling in him. Thus the Spirit which endowed the Church with the gifts and the powers of the new life and the Christ who made of him a new creature became almost merged in one concept. Much also of the Apostle's language concerning Christ and the Spirit may be explained by the fact that to his mind the two Persons in their action upon the human soul were inseparable. The Spirit can only be received by those who are in Christ, union with Christ being the indispensable condition of the indwelling of the Spirit, and we can, therefore, understand how to St Paul the Spirit frequently becomes the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

20. *earnest expectation.* There is an interesting quotation from a recently discovered petition presented by some peasants of the village of Aphrodite in Egypt in the year 537-538 A.D. to a high official which illustrates the use of this word and its connection with the parousia of Christ as in this verse.

"It is a subject of prayer with us day and night to be held worthy of your welcome parousia... We await you as they watch eagerly from Hades for the future parousia of Christ, the

everlasting God". (Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, p. 377.)

The actual form used by St Paul ἀποκαταδοκία is not found outside the New Testament, and in it only twice, viz. here and in Rom. viii. 19, and it is probably a word of the Apostle's own coining. Etymologically considered it suggests two ideas, 1. with outstretched head, 2. diversion from other objects. It is here linked with the familiar Pauline "hope" in order to lend intensity to the Apostle's characterisation of



the forward-looking element in his spiritual experience. He has been speaking of the preaching of Christ as a source of personal joy and this immediately suggests the part he himself can play in the magnifying of his Master. His whole being throbs with the glory of the prospect which like a fair landscape opens before him, and he exults in the passionate hope that he will know no shrinking of shame but break into a glad abandonment of holy boldness in the preaching of Christ "whether by life or death" in that body which has been absolutely devoted to this sacred service. (See "Studies in the Pauline Vocabulary", R. M. Pope, *Expository Times*, xxii. p. 71.)

*that in nothing I shall be put to shame.* Cf. Bengel, "St Paul connects shame with himself, glory with Christ".

*but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death.* The reference is primarily to his attitude at the trial and its possible result and to the hope that no hardship or suffering may intimidate him or lead him to manifest the slightest disloyalty to his Master. But there sweeps across his mind the vision of another Judgment, and his earnest expectation is the hope that in that Day he shall be found never to have proved

unworthy of himself or of his Master, but that all through life and in death, whenever that may come and whatever form it may take, he may have glorified Christ by his consistent devotion in work and suffering. With the thought of the passage we may compare 1 St John ii. 28, "that, if He shall be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming".

*boldness.* Strictly "boldness of speech": cf. 2 Cor. iii. 12, where the old order which kept God at an awful distance and veiled His glory is contrasted with the new with its "liberty" (2 Cor. iii. 17), its freedom of action and access, thus providing an atmosphere where "boldness of speech" can flourish. The word is found in this sense in Plato (*Rep.* 557 B), "Does not liberty of act and speech abound in the city?", and is borrowed in the New Testament and invested with a new and glorious meaning. Cf. Acts iv. 13, where the fine boldness of the Apostles' defence, unlearned and ignorant men though they were, astonished the Jewish Council. So in our context it denotes that Christian boldness which implies candour and utters truth and the whole truth and that right of free speech which is the badge of the privilege of the servant of Christ. (See "Studies in the Pauline Vocabulary", R. M. Pope, *Expository Times*, xxi. p. 236.)

### *Life or death? the choice and its consequences, 21—26*

21, 22 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. <sup>1</sup>But if to live in the flesh,—*if* this is the fruit of my work, then 23 <sup>2</sup>what I shall choose <sup>3</sup>I wot not. But I am in a strait

<sup>1</sup> Or, *But if to live in the flesh be my lot, this is the fruit of my work: and what I shall choose I wot not.*

<sup>2</sup> Or, *what shall I choose?*

<sup>3</sup> Or, *I do not make known*



betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with  
 24 Christ; for it is very far better: yet to abide in the flesh  
 25 is more needful for your sake. And having this confidence,

I know that I shall abide, yea, and abide with you all, for  
 26 your progress and joy <sup>1</sup>in the faith; that your glorying  
 may abound in Christ Jesus in me through my presence  
 with you again.

<sup>1</sup> Or, of faith

*Now whether this trial of mine issues in life or death matters not, for life to me is not what it means to the world at large, but is summed up in the one word "Christ". Christ is its inspiration and Christ is its aim and end, and, therefore, even death is a gain. But if it is put to me that my life in the past has been productive of such a rich harvest of work for Christ and that it is, therefore, clearly in your interest that I should continue to live and work then I find it difficult to tell you what I would choose, life or death. I am indeed in a dilemma, for the prospect of death and of complete union with my Master is inexpressibly sweet to me, and yet for your sakes it is better that I should live. I have already expressed my conviction that my future is to be one of joy and that whether I live or die my own salvation and the glory of Christ are assured, and I am equally convinced that if I remain on the earth I shall remain near you all, in spirit or body, and that my presence with you will help to develop your faith and joy in the Gospel. And so you will have a threefold ground for glorying, in Christ Jesus your Lord, in me His prisoner, and in my presence among you again vouchsafed to you by His favour.*

21. *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* The Apostle is not here weighing "life" and "death" in the balance but is concerned solely with what significance "death" has for him. The question of the mutual advantages of life and death is not entered upon until we reach v. 22. A study of the parallelism which runs through the whole passage makes this quite clear.

Thus "to live in the flesh" v. 22 =  
 "to abide in the flesh" v. 24.

"the fruit of my work" v. 22 =  
 "is more needful for your sake" v. 23.

"to depart and be with Christ"  
 v. 23 = "to die is gain" v. 21.

If, then, the contrast between life and death is introduced in this verse

it leaves us with one member of the parallelism "to live is Christ" without any counterpart. It is, therefore, the question of death only that is dealt with here.

*For.* The connection may be either with v. 18, "I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice" because "to me to live is Christ" or, better perhaps, with the preceding verse, "I am confident that Christ shall be magnified in my body whether by life or whether by death, because to me to live is Christ and, therefore, to die is gain".

*to me to live is Christ.* The emphatic word in the sentence is "to me" which implies that St Paul is here contrasting his ideal of life with that cherished by men generally.

"Life for me means not the interests that usually appeal to men, wealth, family, business, pleasure, the pursuit of which causes death to be regarded as a deprivation and a loss, but life for me is Christ, to serve Christ, to suffer for Christ, to be so closely united with Him that it is not I that live but Christ who liveth in me. Death, therefore, only means the rest after service, the reward of suffering, the blessed union with Him consummated and crowned, and is consequently an unquestionable gain". Cf. Wisdom iii. 2, 3, "In the eyes of fools they seemed to die; and their departure was counted to be their hurt, and their going from us to be their ruin: but they are in peace". The verse, therefore, should be translated, "For to me to live is Christ, and, therefore, to die is gain".

22. The variants in the Margin of the R.V. reveal the difficulty experienced by the Revisers in arriving at a satisfactory interpretation of the Apostle's meaning here. The general idea contained in the verse is clear, and it is quite evident that he is estimating the advantages of a prolonged life and comparing these with those to be gained by death. It is generally agreed that the Apostle's language is incomplete as it stands and that a word or words have to be supplied somewhere. The renderings in the R.V. and in the Margin respectively represent very fairly the attempts generally made to complete the sense of the passage, and most authorities are content to follow the text of the Revisers and to paraphrase, "If my continuing in the flesh, if this means a career still productive for the Gospel, then I know not what to choose".

The objection to the rendering

of the Revisers is that the words "fruit of work" are given a meaning which they do not seem to bear on the surface. Accepting the interpolation of the second 'if' as reasonable we read "If to live in the flesh, if this is fruit of work". "To live in the flesh" is plainly dependent upon "fruit of work", whereas in the interpretations generally accepted the process is the exact reverse of this and "fruit of work" is made dependent upon "to live in the flesh". The question that St Paul puts to himself is whether "to live in the flesh" is the "fruit of work" or, in other words, whether the character of his work *in the past* makes it desirable or necessary that his life should be prolonged for the sake of the Church. We should then paraphrase the verse as follows, "If my work in the past, with all its rich results in the Mission field and the plenteous harvest garnered for Christ, makes it desirable or necessary that I should go on living and working—then when I measure this against the rest and peace I gain in death, what to choose I dare not venture to declare".

*to live in the flesh*, as contrasted with the ideal of life emphasised in the preceding verse.

*I wot not*. A stronger word is needed here to express the Greek, which requires "I make known" and not "I know". "I cannot tell" (cf. Moulton and Milligan, s.v.). The Apostle will not venture to decide between the alternatives, and the choice must be left in his Master's hands.

23. *I am in a strait betwixt the two*. "I am constrained by two conflicting motives", the word here being the same as in 2 Cor. v. 14, "the love of Christ constraineth us".

*to depart.* The Greek word was used originally of unmooring a vessel or moving camp. It is frequently found in Hellenistic inscriptions as a euphemism for "to die", which is obviously the meaning here. Cf. 2 Tim. iv. 6, "The time of my *departure* is at hand".

*and be with Christ.* For the eschatology of the passage see Int. p. lxxxii. The Apostle's mind moves across the intervening spaces and dwells on the final scene, the crowning point of Christian redemption, the perfect and complete union with Christ in glory.

*very, far better.* Cf. Bengel, "which is far, far better".

24. *yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake.* "To be with Christ" and "for your sake" are the horns of the dilemma in which St Paul is placed. The call of Christ in death has a charm which is hard to resist, and yet he knows how they need his presence, his counsel, and his guidance, and so the call to life is loud and strong. A desire to seek rest and peace in death on the part of her children became a pressing problem for the Church in later days when she had sternly to check the rush for martyrdom in times of stress and persecution.

25. This verse is generally understood as expressing the Apostle's confident opinion that because his presence is essential to the future welfare of the Philippian Church he must, therefore, be released. Haupt, however, protests energetically against this view and, I believe, with good reason. He points out that St Paul was at this stage quite uncertain in his own mind concerning the issue of the trial and that the knowledge that he was necessary

to the Church was nothing new to him and could not, therefore, have created this definite and confident impression at that particular moment. If this was all that was needed to assure him of his safe acquittal he need never have hesitated as to his ultimate release, and in that case the whole discussion is entirely out of place. Haupt, therefore, suggests that St Paul is here breaking new ground and that the alternative of life or death is no longer in his mind. The Apostle at this point reverts to the conviction expressed in v. 19 that, whether in life or in death, the future is to be one of joy and that his salvation and glory are assured. What follows here, therefore, is conditional upon his release, but he expresses no definite opinion as to the future in that direction. If the issue is favourable, if he does "remain" it will mean "remaining with you all", i.e. not merely with the Philippians but with the Church as a whole. The "remaining" contemplates not his bodily presence only but the presence and influence of his spirit in the Church. What he feels confident of is, therefore, not his release, but that he will bless the Church in the future *if released*. There is much to be said in favour of Haupt's suggestion. It gives a wider vision of the future as it existed in St Paul's mind than the interpretation generally accepted and removes the difficulty felt by many as to the inadequacy of the need of the Philippians as a firm basis for the Apostle's conviction that he would be acquitted. At the same time it is not easy to agree with his contention that St Paul is not referring to his personal presence at Philippi, in the face of the latter half of the following verse where a future visit

to that Church seems to be definitely contemplated.

*for your progress and joy in the faith. Progress and joy both belong to the faith. Progress.* The Apostle employs the same word here to denote the advance of the Philippians in the Christian faith as he used to describe the effect of his imprisonment and trial upon Roman Christianity (i. 12). His presence at Philippi is to have an influence similar to that it had in Rome and is to become an impulse to greater activity. This will, in itself, fill their hearts with joy, joy proceeding out of loyal and ever increasing dependence upon Christ, which is, according to this Epistle, the true prerogative of the mature Christian.

26. *that your glorying may abound in Christ Jesus in me through my presence with you again.* St Paul frequently declares his conviction, more especially in the Epistles to the Corinthians, that it is the Christian's right and privilege to boast, provided the "boasting" is based on right principles and associated with worthy objects. Here he implies that the Philippians too have just and adequate grounds for "boasting", because of their relation to Jesus Christ, of their connection with himself, Christ's Apostle and prisoner, and because of his coming presence among them, a privilege vouchsafed both to them and to him by the favour of Jesus Christ.

### III. AN EXHORTATION TO UNITY AND SELF SURRENDER, i. 27—ii. 4

(a) *Let their life as a Christian community be worthy of the Gospel of Christ which demands united action, a fearless attitude in the face of opponents, and the capacity to suffer for Christ, i. 27—30*

27 Only <sup>1</sup>let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ: that, whether I come and see you or be absent, I may hear of your state, that ye stand fast in one spirit,  
28 with one soul striving <sup>2</sup>for the faith of the gospel; and in nothing affrighted by the adversaries: which is for them an evident token of perdition, but of your salvation, and that  
29 from God; because to you it hath been granted in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer in  
30 his behalf: having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

<sup>1</sup> Gr. *behave as citizens worthily.*

<sup>2</sup> Gr. *with.*

*For you the one supreme necessity is that your life as a Christian community should be worthy of the Gospel to which you were called and of Christ who is your Head, so that whether I come and see you or be absent and hear of you I may have the satisfaction of knowing that, in the*



*conflict which you wage on behalf of the faith contained in the Gospel I delivered to you, you are standing like soldiers, shoulder to shoulder, animated by that unity of will and purpose which is the work of the Holy Spirit within you and dominated by that sentiment of close fellowship and comradeship which is the fruit of the same Spirit. And further, that your bearing in the face of opponents and persecutors is one of undaunted fearlessness and courage, for this very attitude of yours will be the strongest proof to them that by their hostility towards you they are only bringing upon themselves spiritual ruin, while it will assure you of ultimate victory and eternal salvation, an assurance, let me add, that comes from God Himself. For it is your privilege in relation to Christ not only to believe on Him but to suffer for Him, aye, and to be fellow-soldiers and fellow-sufferers with me, for I have, as you know, both fought and suffered for Him in the past and still continue to do so.*

27. *let your manner of life.* The original is a characteristic Greek word which means "to live a citizen life" as those who are members of a corporate body. A Greek inscription of the first century illustrates the Apostle's thought here, "To those who *lead* the most pious and most beautiful lives". At this period, then, it had come to mean practically "to conduct yourselves", but in this Epistle written to a city which was specially proud of being a Roman colony the original meaning may underlie the use of the word both here and in iii. 20.

*be worthy of the gospel of Christ.* "Every community has its laws and statutes which the loyal citizen strives to obey. The community to which you belong is not, however, ruled by law but it has its principles which are inherent in the Gospel of Christ its Head. See that you honour and respect these principles in your daily Christian life".

*that ye stand fast, like soldiers, shoulder to shoulder.*

*in one spirit.* The parallels in 1 Cor. xii. 13: Ephes. ii. 18, where "spirit" is not preceded by the article and where the reference is definitely to the Holy Spirit, favour

the supposition that the Divine Spirit is also meant here. It is the Spirit of God which creates unity of purpose, firmness and steadfastness of character, and produces the "one soul" which St Paul has in mind in this exhortation. Most authorities, however, influenced no doubt by the following phrase "with one soul", equate "spirit" with the human spirit. In that case the "one spirit" will refer to the influence upon the Philippians of the Divine Spirit and will indicate their spiritual life as one rounded whole, with special emphasis upon unity and firmness.

*with one soul.* The spirit of comradeship, that fine trait of the soldier which has its fruit in perfect sympathy, mutual understanding, and a matchless forgetfulness of self.

*striving for the faith of the gospel.* Better perhaps, "striving side by side for the faith of the gospel" and so emphasising still further the *camaraderie* implied in "with one soul". The Greek is capable of another rendering, "striving side by side with the faith of the gospel", where "faith" would be regarded as the comrade who stands shoulder to shoulder with the com-

batant, cf. 2 Tim. i. 8. The former rendering is the more natural of the two.

*the faith of the gospel.* An early illustration of the tendency of the word "faith" to become a technical term expressing the content of the Gospel.

28. *affrighted.* A word generally used of startled, frightened horses.

*adversaries.* Persecutors and opponents of the Christian community at Philippi. The hostility manifested towards the Apostle himself and his companions when they paid their first visit to that city seems to have been directed afterwards to the Church that was founded there. This opposition must have come principally from Gentiles, as the Jews, who in most of the Pauline centres of work were active opponents of the new religion, were not a strong element in Philippi.

*which*=the firm attitude of the Philippians.

*an evident token of perdition.* Their fearlessness in the face of attack will be a demonstration to the persecutors that their attempts against the Christians are destined to failure because they are fighting against God and that they are only bringing upon themselves that fate which consists in the loss of eternal life and permanent exclusion from

the kingdom of God, cf. iii. 19 : 2 Thess. i. 5.

*but of your salvation.* Their own steadfastness, on the other hand, is a pledge of their success in the present conflict, of final victory against every enemy, and of life eternal in Christ.

*and that from God.* Not "salvation" but the whole process described in the verse. The assurance of the hopeless defeat of the enemy and of their own ultimate victory and salvation is a direct intimation from God.

29. Faith in Christ implies suffering for Christ which is the Christian's choicest privilege, cf. Acts v. 41 : Rom. v. 3 : Col. i. 24, and Bacon, "Adversity is the blessing of the New Testament".

30. *conflict.* The original denotes a contest in the athletic games. Both the Apostle and his converts were contending for the crown given to those who had "fought a good fight and finished their course". With the thought in this verse cf. 2 Cor. i. 6, "which worketh in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer", where the Apostle also speaks of the fellowship in suffering between himself and his flock. In 1 Thess. ii. 14 he emphasises the community of suffering between the Churches of Judaea and that of Thessalonica.

## CHAPTER II

- (b) (i) *The appeal is continued with special emphasis upon humility and abnegation of self as its basis, 1—4*

**II.** 1 If there is therefore any comfort in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any  
2 tender mercies and compassions, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one  
3 accord, <sup>1</sup>of one mind; *doing* nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting  
4 other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.

<sup>1</sup> Some ancient authorities read *of the same mind*.

*And now let me appeal to all that is most essential and most valuable in your Christian experience. If your knowledge and possession of Christ have any power to persuade you, if you have found comfort in Christian love, if your partaking of the gift of the Holy Spirit has created among you a sense of real fellowship, if you believe in tender-heartedness and compassion, let there be perfect unity among you and so fill my cup of joy to the brim. When I speak of unity I mean a unity of thought, will, and purpose, and above all a unity based on that Christian virtue of humility which knows neither jealousy, ambition, nor pride, and studies the interests of others and not its own.*

1. St Paul opens the most weighty section of the Epistle with an impassioned appeal to the deepest Christian experiences of his readers. The heaping together of phrase upon phrase, the repetition of "if" before each constituent, and the choice of the words themselves all point to the grave importance which the Apostle attached to his exhortation. Further, the experiences appealed to are in their very nature conducive to humility and unity. They are the virtues and qualities which are characteristic of a corporate body, in which the interests of the individual are submerged for the benefit

of the community at large; comfort, fellowship, tenderness, and sympathy.

*therefore.* This is generally connected with i. 27, "Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ", so that the notes of steadfastness and unity introduced there are here expanded and based more definitely upon humility and abnegation of self. The Dean of Lichfield (Dr Savage) in a sermon reported in the *Guardian* of Feb. 24, 1916, has, however, a very suggestive and interesting explanation of the reference in the word "therefore" and of the connection of the passage with other Pauline matter. He contends that

"therefore" cannot be satisfactorily accounted for by reference to any preceding context in the Epistle and that it must consequently refer to some well-known saying which would be readily recognised by the Philip-pians. He finds a definite clue to this saying in the third clause of the passage, "if any fellowship of the Spirit", and in the general resemblance of the passage as a whole to the Apostolic benediction in 2 Cor. xiii. 14. The "comfort in Christ" corresponds to "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ", "the consolation of love" to "the love of God", and "the fellowship of the Spirit" to "the fellowship of the Holy Ghost".

*comfort in Christ, consolation in love.* The verbs analogous to *com-fort* and *consolation* are found together in 1 Thess. ii. 11, "how we dealt with each one of you, as a father with his own children, *exhorting* you and *encouraging* you". Again the former of the two verbs is found in Ephes. iv. 1 and 1 Cor. i. 10, where it has manifestly the sense of "I beseech". It is, therefore, better to attach to the noun here the meaning associated with it in the New Testament generally, where it seems to have the connotation of "appeal" and to translate "If Christ appeals to you". "If what you have experienced in Christ appeals to you, if it has power to lift you to still higher ideals".

*consolation.* If we are to make any marked distinction between this and the word "comfort" in the preceding clause we shall do well to translate it as the Revisers do, "consolation", consolation which issues in encouragement to greater efforts. This is the meaning of the word in Wisdom iii. 18, "Nor in the day of decision shall they have *consolation*".

*if any fellowship of the Spirit.* Cf. Moule, "if there is such a thing as Spirit-sharing". Paraphrase, "If God's Holy Spirit is the consecrating, guiding power of your life, if not only you have partaken of Him but if He fully shares your very life". Moffatt's translation of the whole passage is most illuminating, "So by all the stimulus of Christ, by every incentive of love, by all your participation in the Spirit, by all your affectionate tenderness, I pray you to give me the utter joy".

2. *fulfil ye my joy.* The Apostle here completes the thought in i. 27, "If I could only see you standing firm and fearless, fighting a good fight for the Gospel, and, profiting by your experiences in Christ, showing perfect unity among yourselves, my cup of joy would be full to overflowing".

*that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.* The first clause "be of the same mind" describes the unity which the Apostle desires in general terms, and it is then illustrated more in detail in the three succeeding clauses.

*having the same love.* It is a unity resting on the love of Christ which engenders love of the brethren.

*being of one accord.* A unity involving a common aim and purpose.

*of one mind.* With hearts knit together by Christian sympathy and like sentiments.

3. *faction.* See note on i. 17. The conjunction of the word in this verse with "vainglory" and "humility" supports the meaning given to it there. It is the ambition of rival leaders that the Apostle has principally in view, perhaps that of the women, Euodia and Syntyche, mentioned in iv. 2.



*vainglory.* This is the only instance where the noun occurs in the New Testament but it is found in the LXX in 4 Macc. ii. 15, and the adjective "vainglorious" in Gal. v. 26. The idea conveyed in the word is that of "glory which has no reality, pretentious, hollow". (Souter, s.v.) Cf. St John v. 44.

*lowliness of mind.* ταπεινοφροσύνη which is here translated "lowliness of mind" (It is difficult to understand why the Revisers represent the word by three different English equivalents, "humility" in Col. iii. 12, "lowliness" in Ephes. iv. 2, and "lowliness of mind" here, when the familiar term "humility" would have done excellent and adequate service in all three cases.) is not found in the LXX and in the few cases where it occurs in profane literature as e.g. in Josephus, *B. J.* xlix. 2 and Epictetus, *Diss.* iii. 24, 25 it is used in a bad sense, of pusillanimity or abjectness. The corresponding word in classical Greek is ταπεινότης but this is always associated with the idea of baseness. There is an interesting conversation on "humility" between Gladstone and Morley recorded in the latter's *Life of Gladstone*, Vol. III. p. 466, where Gladstone says, "I admit there is no Greek word of good credit for the virtue of humility".

Morley. "ταπεινότης? But that has the association of meanness".

Gladstone. "Yes, a shabby sort of humility. Humility as a sovereign grace is the creation of Christianity".

Some remarks of Lecky's are to the same effect. Cf. *Rationalism in Europe*, Vol. II. p. 102 (Cheap Edition), "Pride was deemed the greatest of virtues and humility the most contemptible of weaknesses in Roman civilisation", and *History of*

*European Morals*, Vol. II. p. 186 (Cheap Edition), "The disposition of humility is pre-eminently and almost exclusively a Christian virtue".

In the two other New Testament passages noted above where the word occurs it comes before "meekness and long-suffering", showing that it is only by a wise and lowly estimate of ourselves that we come to know what is due to others. Humility, then, describes the spirit of one who has come to the knowledge of himself in relation to God and it is, therefore, primarily a religious and not a social virtue. There is no trace in it of the meanness or weakness associated with the term in pagan literature. On the contrary it is the badge of the strong, what Ruskin in his "Frondes Agrestes" describes as the first test of a truly great man. St Augustine's estimate of humility is equally striking, "The first and second and third Christian grace is humility". St Paul carries his admiration of "humility" to even greater lengths than any of the great writers we have quoted. For him it is the one specific virtue and quality which above all others explains the work and character of Christ, our Saviour, who "humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death". It was the special creation of Christ Himself, it was He who brought the new spirit into the world and illustrated it in His own Person because He was "meek and lowly of heart".

*counting other better than himself.* An expansion and illustration of the virtue of humility. It is the quality based on a right knowledge of self, of self as seen in perfect truth, in its relation to God and to God's holiness, which produces a lowly depreciation of self and a high

appreciation of all that is good and estimable in others.

4. *each.* The Greek word is in the plural, which implies that the Apostle is thinking here of groups and not of mere individuals. It is the vice of parties and party-leader-

ships that is condemned. The verse may mean either "regarding others' qualities as being better than your own", or "consulting the interests of others as well as and before your own".

(ii) *An appeal to Christ as the crowning example of humility and self-surrender and as illustrating the principle that the way of humiliation is the path to glory, 5—11*

5 Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus :  
6 who, <sup>1</sup>being in the form of God, counted it not a <sup>2</sup>prize to  
7 be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking  
the form of a <sup>3</sup>servant, <sup>4</sup>being made in the likeness of men ;  
8 and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself,  
becoming obedient *even* unto death, yea, the death of the  
9 cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave  
10 unto him the name which is above every name ; that in  
the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in  
heaven and *things* on earth and <sup>5</sup>*things* under the earth,  
11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is  
Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

<sup>1</sup> Gr. *being originally.*

<sup>3</sup> Gr. *bondservant.*

<sup>5</sup> Or, *things of the world below*

<sup>2</sup> Gr. *a thing to be grasped.*

<sup>4</sup> Gr. *becoming in.*

*Now let your fellowship towards one another be of the same character as that you experience in Christ. For Christ, though He was subsisting in the essential nature of God from all eternity, did not regard His being on an equality of outward glory and majesty with God as a prize and treasure to be tightly held, but of His own will emptied Himself thereof, and took the nature of a bond-servant, and was made like us men. Yet He was not mere man but the representative man, though in outward guise and manner of life He was man and nothing more. And this was not the limit of His humiliation for He stooped even to die, aye, and died like a slave upon the Cross. But the depth of His humiliation in submitting to the shameful death upon the Cross had its consequence and its reward in an exaltation which was proportionately lofty. For God raised Him up on high to His own right hand, and gave Him the Name which is above every name—the name of Jesus Christ, Lord of all—so that, as Isaiah prophesied of old, all creation, animate and inanimate, in heaven, on earth, and in the under-world might adore the name of Jesus, Incarnate and*

*Exalted, and that the whole universe might bend the knee to Him and lift its voice in praise of Him, proclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord. Thus shall the whole process of redemption be crowned and the glory of God the Father be manifested in all its fulness.*

5. *Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.* This rendering represents the view of the passage taken by most authorities but it does not seem to set forth accurately what the Apostle says here. He is still thinking of the life of the Christian community, and the motive of the verse seems to be an appeal to that community to cherish that spirit of Christian fellowship among its members which corresponds to the fellowship it enjoys with Christ. It is not an appeal to Christ as the outstanding example of humility that is in question here, although that is implied all through the passage that follows. The words of the Greek and the use of the title, Christ Jesus, argue against the view that is prevalent. It is not the Jesus that walked on earth but the Christ, Incarnate and Exalted, that is in St Paul's mind, and the unity that he presses upon the Philip-pian Church is to be achieved by the growth of that spirit of fellowship which it has already experienced in its relation to Christ Himself. Cf. Moffatt's translation, "Treat one another with the same spirit as you experience in Christ".

6-11. For the doctrinal aspects of this passage see Int. pp. lxxiii-lxxxi.

*being.* The Greek has the sense of "being originally", as is pointed out in the Margin of the R.V., combined perhaps with the idea of "continuing to be", and the complete thought is illustrated by 1 St John i. 1, "That which was from the beginning..., the eternal life, which was with the Father, and

was manifested unto us", where the eternal Being of the pre-Incarnate Son and His continuance as such are clearly brought out.

*in the form of God.* The phrase declares the essential Divinity of Christ, that which is inseparable from the essence and nature of God. It is not the glory of the Godhead of which Christ divested Himself at His Incarnation that is meant here, but the Divine nature, unchangably and inseparably subsisting in the Person of the Son. The same idea of the completeness and the essential nature of the Godhead of the Divine Son is expressed in Col. i. 15, "the image of the invisible God", where "image" denotes a complete and perfect representation of that which it figures.

*a prize.* The word ἀπαιγμός is capable of two meanings, an active and a passive, i.e. it may mean "snatching", whence we get the "robbery" of the A.V. or "the thing snatched" and hence "prize" as in the R.V. If the word is taken in the active sense we should translate "who did not regard it as an act of rapacity that He was on an equality with God, but yet emptied Himself of that equality and took on the form of a servant". With the passive sense we get, "who did not regard His being on an equality with God (1) as a treasure to be held fast, or (2) as a treasure to be clutched at, but emptied Himself of it". There would seem to be no reason to hesitate as to our choice of meaning here, because the active sense of the word gives us a render-



ing which is not in accord with the trend of the Christological passage as a whole. The emphasis is not on the claim to a dignity which was Christ's by right as is implied in the translation "robbery", but on the surrender of that dignity. But when we have arrived at this point the further question arises whether the "equality with God" is something which Christ possesses already and surrenders at the Incarnation, or whether it is something still in the future, a prerogative that He might attain to, but for the attainment of which two courses were open to Him. He might claim it as His right, but He preferred to realise it by the free gift of His Father as the reward of His humiliation and obedience. In this case "equality with God" looks to the exaltation and glory described in *vs.* 9, 10, and to the bestowal upon Him of "the Name which is above every name". There is much that is attractive in this suggestion, but as we have pointed out in the Introduction it is open to the very weighty objection that it is difficult to conceive how Christ could divest Himself of that which was not His. On the whole the former of the two translations that we have associated with the passive meaning ἀρπαγμός, which is also that of the Revisers, is to be preferred as being more in harmony with the general scope of the passage.

*equality with God.* This is not quite the same as "equal with God", which calls attention perhaps to the Personality, rather than to the characteristics which we should associate with the expression in the text. The phrase has been interpreted in three ways.

(1) As equivalent to "being in the form of God" and denoting the

very essence of Deity and supporting, therefore, the theory of the "kenosis" which maintains that at the Incarnation Christ did actually divest Himself of some of His Divine attributes.

(2) It denotes the outward glory and manifestation of the Godhead, which the Son surrendered at His Incarnation, those associations of His Divinity which are separable from His essential nature.

(3) A dignity and prerogative which were to be His in the future as the reward of His humiliation.

For reasons which are fully stated in the Int. pp. lxxiii-lxxvii it is the second of these three interpretations that is accepted here.

7. *but emptied himself.* A new meaning for this expression has been suggested by the Rev. W. Warren in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol. xii. p. 461. Taking ἀρπαγμός in the active sense and regarding the phrase "He emptied Himself" as complete in itself and not requiring a secondary object Mr Warren translates the passage, "He considered His equality with God not as an opportunity for self-aggrandisement, but effaced all thought of self and poured out His fulness to enrich others". The passage in question, he tells us, contains two ideas, (1) the abnegation of selfish impulses—the opposite of ambition, and (2) self-devotion, self-sacrifice for the sake of others—the opposite of plundering others or ignoring their interests in that of one's own ambition, a view of our Lord's mission often found in the New Testament as e.g. in Ephes. i. 23, iv. 10 : 2 Cor. viii. 9 : Heb. ix. 12. The verb "emptied", therefore, does not require a Genitive of the secondary object, and Christ did not empty Himself of anything but *poured*



*Himself*, emptying His fulness into us. Cf. τὰ ὑπάρχοντα κενοῦν, to spend all one's property on the poor. St Chrys. *Hom. xiii. on 1 Tim.* p. 617 D.

*taking the form of a servant*, in contrast to the "form of God" which was His from all eternity, the term "form" in both cases expressing the very essence of the nature implied, there the very essence and fulness of Deity, here humanity in all its reality. In the use of the term "servant" there may be an allusion to the "Servant of the Lord" in deutero-Isaiah, because there and here it is the depth of the humiliation and suffering of Jesus the Messiah that is emphasised. "He took the form of a slave".

*being made*, as to His humanity in contradistinction to His "being" from all eternity which is predicated of His Divine nature.

*in the likeness of men.* The force of the plural "men" is to emphasise the fact that Christ in his humanity represented mankind in general.

8. *fashion*, i.e. the outward and changable guise as contrasted with "form", the inseparable, unchangable essence. Here it represents the impression Christ made on the world at large. He was "found", i.e. recognised, as a man in all that is associated with man's outward being, in shape, language, conduct, activities, and needs.

There is a striking parallel to St Paul's language in this and the preceding verse in the Testaments of the XII Patriarchs.

Cf. Test. Benjamin x. 7, "The King of Heaven will appear on earth *in the form of a man*", and Test. Zebulun ix. 8, "Ye will see God *in the fashion of a man*", where the two characteristic words μορφή and σχῆμα are used. These verses,

however, do not appear in all the MSS. of the Testaments and are regarded by Dr Charles as later Christian interpolations and as possibly based on this passage.

*he humbled himself.* A further step in that process of self-humiliation upon which Christ entered at the Incarnation. This was like the taking of human nature the act of His own free will. "He humbled himself".

*becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.* An explanation of the measure of the self-humiliation of the preceding clause. He not only assumed the nature of a slave, but stooped even to die the death of the slave. There is in the Apostle's language a reflection of the horror and degradation associated with crucifixion in the mind of every Roman. Cf. Cicero, *Pro Rabirio*, v. 16, "Far be the very name of the cross, not only from the bodies of Roman citizens, but from their imaginations, eyes, and ears".

9. *Wherefore also God highly exalted him.* This is not so much the reward as the direct and natural consequence of the humiliation. It also illustrates our Lord's own teaching, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted". Inasmuch as the humiliation touched the lowest depths of shame and suffering the exaltation is proportionately lofty, and He who willed to die the death of the slave on the Cross was raised to the highest pinnacle of glory and was seated at the right hand of God. As the Divinity of Christ remains on the same level throughout the passage the exaltation must be primarily connected with His humanity, but there is an advance of His whole being in function and office. He now be-

comes Ruler in His Messianic Kingdom, a position that He has gained through His life, death, and resurrection.

*the name.* This has been generally explained either as "Jesus Christ" or as "Lord". "Jesus Christ" emphasises the union of the human and the Divine in the Person of Him who was now raised to reign over the new Kingdom, and associates the Jesus of the earthly life with its experiences and sufferings with the Christ, God's anointed, now supreme in the Messianic realm. "Lord", on the other hand, was the Greek equivalent of the glorious Divine Name of the Old Testament and in Hellenistic pagan religious life was the most significant title attached to the many deities that were worshipped in that polytheistic world. Its application to Christ, therefore, represents the climax and consummation of New Testament Christology. To St Paul and his age, the Christ, Incarnate, Crucified, and Risen, has become equated with the Most High God of the Jew, and for Him is claimed exclusively the honour associated in paganism with the supreme deity. The "name" here may also be identified with the full title "Jesus Christ, the Lord", which would meet all that is claimed on behalf of each separate constituent and would give a much fuller scope to the "name" than either constituent taken by itself. It connotes the human Jesus, the Divine Messiah, the Lord and Ruler of the Messianic Kingdom, and all combined in the Person of Christ, Incarnate and Exalted to the right hand of God.

10. *in the name of Jesus.* In primitive times the name and being tended to be one in essence and the name was not a mere convention but

the thing itself, so that if any one knew the name he was master in some measure of the thing. It was, however, in relation to the world of spirits, good and evil, that the name came to assume momentous importance. A familiar illustration of this is the story of Jacob wrestling with the angel at Peniel, "Tell me I pray thee thy name" (Gen. xxxii. 29). If a man came to know the name of the demon powers which were the bane and terror of primitive life he was supposed to be able to exercise influence over the demon and to be able to use him in his own interest. There may be a reference to this idea in this verse. St Paul's imagery seems to represent a conflict between the hosts of the spirit world, demons, evil spirits, powers of darkness, whose names were known to the magician, who could, therefore, use them for his own purposes, and the Christian, who also knows the Name which is above every name, and to whom, therefore, victory is a certainty. Cf. Just. Mart. *Trypho*, 30, "Even the very name of Jesus is terrible to the demons". (See Glover, *The Christian Tradition and its Verification*, p. 143 ff.)

*every knee should bow...should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.* An adaptation of Isaiah xlv. 23, which is quoted exactly in Rom. xiv. 11 and predicated of God. It is here expanded by the addition of the clause "of things in heaven...under the earth" and applied to the exalted Christ, and is a significant illustration of the place occupied by Christ in St Paul's conception of the Godhead.

*of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth.* It is a moot point whether the adjectives here corresponding to "the things in heaven etc." should be

taken as neuter or masculine. If they are masculine the classification would represent angels, men, and the souls of the departed. It is better on the whole perhaps to follow the R.V. and to regard the passage as an expression of the homage of all creation, animate and inanimate, to Christ as He enters upon His kingdom and glory.

There were two different cosmological conceptions in the ancient world, the Aryan, which was based on the numbers 3 and 9, and the Semitic, based on the numbers 7 and 12. The old Greek, Indian, and Persian mythologies show a world built on the 9 basis. Thus there are

a. Three Heavens=Paradise.

b. Three Earths=Middle Stations.

c. Three Under-worlds=Hades.

In later developments such as Platonism and Stoicism Heaven, or the region of Aether, was subdivided into (1) central fire, (2) the plane of the fixed stars, (3) the planet sphere, while Earth, or the Air region, consisted of (1) Air, (2) Water, (3) Earth. The third region, that of the under-world, was struck out by the Stoics, but it survived in the popular consciousness. In his cosmological ideas St Paul was more Greek than Jew and the number 3 occupies an important place in his writings. Cf. 1 Cor. i. 23, 26 : vi. 11 : xi. 3 ; Gal. v. 22, where we find 9 fruits of the Spirit divided into 3 classes. A striking instance of this usage is also found in this verse where he adopts the Aryan world-conception with its three regions, (1) Heaven, which he also subdivides into 3 Heavens in 2 Cor. xii. 2. (2) Earth, which also has its middle stations. Cf. Ephes. ii. 2. (3) The under-world. In the matter of his cosmogony and the significance he attached to the number

3 and its multiple 9 we may trace the influence upon the Apostle of the Judaism of the Diaspora, which was already permeated by Babylonian and Persian ideas, as well as the influence of the Hellenism of Tarsus, where both in the Stoic schools and in the popular consciousness this view of the world prevailed.

11. *every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.* We have probably here the earliest form of the Baptismal Confession and the original germ of the Christian Creed. The catechumen before baptism would be called upon to declare, "I believe that Jesus Christ is Lord". This is confirmed by the Western text of Acts viii. 37, where the eunuch is represented as saying "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God", and by analogous passages in St Paul's Epistles as e.g. Rom. x. 9, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord", and 1 Cor. xii. 3, "No man can say 'Jesus is Lord' but in the Holy Spirit".

*Lord.* This title became the characteristic expression of the Christian attitude towards Christ in the Apostolic age. It is a fact of the greatest significance that this term, so intimately associated with the Supreme God in the mind of every Jew, should also be the designation which adhered to Christ in the early Church. In the pagan world it is found as the regular title of heathen gods in many inscriptions of the period, but it only emerges into full daylight in the Emperor-cult among the Romans. From the time of Augustus downwards it is the normal designation of the Emperors in relation to the cult, and "our Lord" is by no means infrequent in this connection. The Hellenistic Christian was, therefore, perfectly familiar with



the very definite connotation of the title which is unhesitatingly applied by St Paul to Christ. In 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6, where he speaks of "lords many" and "one Lord Jesus Christ" there is probably a tacit protest against the use of the term in connection with the Emperor-cult which was then beginning to assume a very important place in the religious life of the Empire and was destined for some considerable period to be the most powerful rival of Christianity. The passage here shows clearly that the Apostolic Church by its confes-

sion of Jesus Christ as Lord claimed for Him the homage and adoration of all creation.

*to the glory of God the Father.* The aim and climax of the whole process of creation and redemption. Cf. 1 Cor. xv. 28, "that God may be all in all" and St Chrysostom, *Homily on Philippians*, Chap. iv, "A mighty proof it is of the Father's power and goodness and wisdom that He hath begotten such a Son, a Son nowise inferior in goodness and wisdom... like Him in all things, Fatherhood excepted".

### *Special note on vv. 10, 11*

Some scholars have seen in these verses a doctrine of "universalism" on St Paul's part. Thus Dr Charles in his article on "Eschatology" in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, Vol. II. Col. 1386, writes: "Since all things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible (whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers), were created by Christ (Col. i. 16) and were to find their consummation in Him, they must come within the sphere of His mediatorial activity: they must ultimately be summed up in Him as their head (Ephes. i. 10). Hence in the world of spiritual beings since some have sinned or apostatised, they too must share in the atonement of the cross of Christ and so obtain reconciliation (Col. i. 20) and join in the universal worship of the Son (Phil. ii. 10)... Since all things must be reconciled and summed up in Christ there can be no room finally in the universe for a wicked being, whether human or angelic. Thus the Pauline eschatology points obviously in its ultimate issue either to the final redemption of all created personal beings or to the destruction of the finally impenitent". Dr James Orr writes to the same effect in the *Expositor*, VII. x. p. 406: "There are hints in the New Testament of a future unification—a gathering up of all things in Christ as Head—whence God is once more 'all in all' which would at least seem to imply a cessation of active opposition to the will of God—an acknowledgment universally of His authority and rule—a reconciliation in some form on the part of those outside the blessedness of the Kingdom, with the order of the universe. Cf. Acts iii. 21: 1 Cor. xv. 24—28: Ephes. i. 10: Phil. ii. 10—11". But although the Apostle's language in these verses and elsewhere, taken by itself, might seem to favour "universalism" and to involve the recovery of all personal beings, his language in other contexts is quite unambiguous and leaves us in no possible doubt as to his views on the ultimate fate of the wicked. We need only refer to 2 Cor. iv. 3, and especially to 2 Thess. i. 9, where he describes their future as "eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of His might". This might imply



“annihilation”, but is decisive against “universalism”. With reference to vv. 10, 11 of this chapter Dr Charles seems to read into them considerably more than they convey to the ordinary reader. Here, as elsewhere, St Paul is painting the ideal and gives a clear assertion of the purpose of God’s redemption in Christ, which is potentially to embrace the whole of creation without necessarily assuming that the loving purpose of God is to be fully accomplished. He has a splendid vision of the effect upon the whole universe of the glorious exaltation of Christ and of His coming to reign, but in this vision, as in many another, it is only the general idea that is outlined, and it is unsafe to conclude from an outburst of inspired enthusiasm that the idea will be fulfilled in all its details.

(iii) *A further exhortation, based on the preceding appeal, to obedience, earnest and anxious effort, and mutual peace, 12—16*

12 So then, my beloved, even as ye have always obeyed,  
not <sup>1</sup>as in my presence only, but now much more in my  
absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trem-  
13 bling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and  
14 to work, for his good pleasure. Do all things without  
15 murmurings and disputings; that ye may be blameless  
and harmless, children of God without blemish in the  
midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom  
16 ye are seen as <sup>2</sup>lights in the world, holding forth the word  
of life; that I may have whereof to glory in the day of  
Christ, that I did not run in vain neither labour in vain.

<sup>1</sup> Some ancient authorities omit *as*.

<sup>2</sup> Gr. *luminaries*.

*You have seen how our blessed Master obeyed even unto death and how glorious was the exaltation which followed. So now, my beloved, do ye follow in His steps, and let your obedience be as conspicuous now when I am away from you as it was when I was still among you. Avoid the habit of depending too much upon my presence with you, and complete the good work which was begun in you by God through me, working out your own salvation to its complete fruition, but in due submission to the will of God and always having in view the testing at the Great Day. Work out your own salvation did I say? Yes, but remember that it is God after all who is your strength and stay and that it is His grace that fills you with power both to will and to work, and that your ultimate salvation is the accomplishment of His love and purpose for you. Avoid also in your Christian life that spirit of discontent and that habit of questioning the decrees of God which were the curse of Israel of old, so that in the world around you,*

*among people who have wandered far away from the truth of God and obstinately refuse to return, you may be marked as those that live without reproach, transparent in your honesty, and without spot or stain on your Christian robe, as befits those who are God's own children. You must be seen as lights shining in a dark world, illuminating and freely offering to all that need it the Gospel that alone brings life, so that in the day when Christ shall hold His great Assize you may be my pride and glory and a living proof that I did not work for nothing.*

12. *So then.* The connection here is not quite clear. The Apostle may be looking back to v. 2 "be of the same mind" which leads us back still further to i. 27, the exhortation to present an unbroken front to the enemy; or he may have in view the whole of the preceding passage and is impressing upon the Philippians the example of Christ's humility and exaltation as a guide and encouragement to them. A better connection than either of these seems to be indicated by the presence of "obey" in the verse, which immediately suggests the "obedience of Christ" in v. 18 as the point that is emphasised here.

*not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence.* This is to be taken with what follows. "Do not place too much dependence upon my presence among you, but work out your *own* salvation". The previous sentence is incomplete as it stands and requires the addition of "continue to do so" or some similar phrase, and with the sentence "not as in my presence only" a new thought begins.

*work out your own salvation.* There are two emphatic words in this injunction, "out" and "own". "Work out". The letter is written to "saints" who had already made some considerable progress in the Christian life, cf. i. 6. The good work has been begun and they are to co-operate with God in working it

completely out and in bringing it to its full accomplishment. The Apostle himself is no longer among them, the planting and watering are past, and it is now for God to give the increase. Hence "work out your *own* salvation", no longer depending upon his personal presence, but in complete dependence upon God.

*with fear and trembling.* This is a set phrase in the Pauline Epistles, cf. Ephes. vi. 5, where it is used of the disposition of slaves towards their masters, and 2 Cor. vii. 15, where the reception to be given to Titus by the Corinthian Church is in view. In both cases the phrase signifies the attitude of submission. In 1 Cor. ii. 3, 4 the Apostle speaks of himself as being "in much trembling" and yet his speech and preaching are "in demonstration of the Spirit and power". The expression is, therefore, free from any trace of fearful anxiety or of the terror of the slave. It is the frame of mind which betokens submission to the will and purpose of God that is indicated here, and this leads to the thought contained in the verse that follows. There is perhaps also included in the phrase the fear of the judgment (cf. v. 16) at the day of Christ, the noble fear of failing to respond to love which has not yet risen to the level of 1 St John iv. 18, cf. Heb. xii. 28.

13. *for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to work.* In

the original the stress is laid on "God" (for *God* it is that works) in order to prevent any misunderstanding and discouragement that might have been caused by the emphasis on "yourselves" implied in "your own salvation". Their salvation is ultimately God's work, and it is God Himself who has created in them the desire to fulfil His gracious will and who will provide the power to bring that desire to its complete fruition.

*for his good pleasure.* This is to be connected with "it is God which worketh". The whole aim of redemption, of God's own work in them and of their co-operation with Him, is that He may fully accomplish His plan and purpose for them.

14. *Do all things without murmurings and disputings.*

*murmurings.* Souter, s.v., explains "murmurings" as generally meaning "smouldering discontent", cf. 1 Cor. x. 10.

*disputings.* The Greek word is used in the *papyri* of a judicial inquiry, the hearing of a case, and arguments in court, whence we get the thought of outward disputings and discussions, and Souter translates it "deliberation, plotting". The contemporary usage of both these words favours the idea that the Apostle is referring here to social weaknesses in the life of the Philippian community and that it is the mutual relations of the brethren towards each other that are in question. The use of the word "murmurings" in the LXX, however, and elsewhere in St Paul as e.g. in 1 Cor. x. 10, where the reference is clearly to the conduct of Israel in the wilderness, and the quotation from Deut. xxxii. 5 which immediately follows would seem to show decisively that what the Apostle has in view is the sin to

which the Israelites of old were so prone, murmuring against God and dissatisfaction with His decrees.

15. The whole of this verse is reminiscent of the LXX of Deut. xxxii. 5, "They have gone astray, they are not His children, but culpable, a crooked and perverse generation".

*blameless*, as regards the opinion of the outside world concerning them.

*harmless.* The Greek is used of wine and metals, and signifies purity, freedom from adulteration and alloy. Hence, "simplicity of character", differing only slightly from the "sincere" of i. 10. As contrasted with "blameless" which refers to the opinion of others, it seems to denote the Divine estimate of them.

*children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.* This is, as we have seen, an adaptation of Deut. xxxii. 5, which implies that the Apostle meant to warn the Philippians against following the example of Israel during its sojourn in the wilderness.

*among whom ye are seen as lights in the world. Lights.* The Greek word occurs only here and in Rev. xxi. 11 in the New Testament, and in the latter context it has apparently the sense of "sun". In the LXX it is used almost exclusively of the heavenly bodies, and it is, therefore, better here to translate it more definitely as "luminaries". The Christian is in his degree to reflect the character of Him who said of Himself "I am the light of the world".

16. *holding forth the word of life.* An equally legitimate translation would be "holding fast the word of life". Our choice of renderings will depend upon the view we take of the reference here. The former trans-

lation carries on the thought of the preceding verse where the *influence* of the Christians upon the outside world is clearly in question. In that case St Paul is pleading that the Philippians ought to be absorbed in the true mission of the Church to those outside instead of letting themselves dispute and quarrel with each other. If we accept the sense of "holding fast" we get the following sequence of thought. The world is dark, but you are points of light; don't let yourselves be extinguished as you will be if you give way to discontent and disputes. It is the thought of *contrast* with the outside world that is uppermost in this rendering and not that of influence. Harmony and humility are essential not only to the well-being but to the very being of a Church: only thus is it marked off from the rest of the world. (See Moffatt, *Expositor*, VIII. xii. pp. 344—345.)

*the word of life.* The word that brings life, the Gospel in all its truth and in all its quickening power.

*life*, in the widest sense of the term, the "eternal life" of St John's Gospel. This is the gift of God which is the possession of the Christian from the moment he turns to Christ and lays hold of His salvation and is an undying principle whose essence lies in partaking of the life of Christ, being grafted into Him, and being ruled by His Spirit. It reaches its complete realisation in the final union with Christ in His glorious Kingdom. The conception of Christ as "light" and "life" is also asso-

ciated with the Johannine "Word" in St John i. 4, "and the light was the life of men".

*that I may have whereof to glory in the day of Christ.* For a similar thought cf. i. 26 with the note upon it, and also 2 Cor. i. 4, "ye also are our glorying in the day of our Lord Jesus". The pride which the Apostle has in mind here is that Christian pride which is based upon the successful working of the grace of God in Christ upon his converts through the instrumentality of his missionary activity. The time will come when before the judgment seat of God everyone will be rewarded according to his deeds. In that day he also must have a treasure to show before God, and even now he may begin to congratulate himself on what he will eventually produce. Such "boasting" is no "vain-glory" but is the duty and privilege of the Apostle and of every Christian as such.

*that I did not run in vain neither labour in vain.* The day of Christ is to prove that "he did not work for nothing". (Moffatt's translation.) The first half of the sentence is found in Gal. ii. 2 and the second in Gal. iv. 11. There may be here an echo of Isaiah xlix. 4, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain". Deissmann (*Light from the Ancient East*, p. 317) suggests that St Paul's frequent use of the phrase "labour in vain" is a trembling echo of the discouragement resulting from a width of cloth being rejected as badly woven and, therefore, not paid for.



(iv) *St Paul contemplates the possibility that his labours may be terminated by a violent death. Yet, be the issue what it may, he will rejoice and they must rejoice with him, 17—18*

17 Yea, and if I am <sup>1</sup>offered upon the sacrifice and service of  
18 your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all: and in the same manner do ye also joy, and rejoice with me.

<sup>1</sup> Gr. *poured out as a drink-offering.*

*And even if my trial, as it possibly may, ends in condemnation and death I shall regard my execution as crowning the offering to God of your faith and as the libation that I shall pour upon the sacrifice of your devoted service. Let us not sorrow, therefore, even though I have to die, but let us all rejoice therein, both you and I.*

17. In the figure employed here the Apostle has probably in mind the pagan sacrifices in which the libation is poured over the victim and not the Jewish custom of pouring water round the altar. The general sense of the verse is quite clear. The faith of the Philippians is the "sacrifice"; the actual offering of the sacrifice before God is the "service"; the possible violent death of the Apostle is the "libation" which is to be poured over the sacrifice of the Philippians' faith and is to crown and complete it. There is a considerable difference of opinion as to the identity of the "priest" who offers the sacrifice in the figure. Most commentators contend that it is the Philippian Church that offers up its own faith as a sacrifice to God and that St Paul's blood is the libation added to the offering. A better solution is to regard St Paul as the priest, the Philippians' faith as the sacrifice, and the priest's own blood as poured out upon the victim that he is offering. The thought of the Philippian Church as an offering acceptable to God has been already

expressed in the preceding verse, and it is his own pride and his own anxiety as the person responsible for the character of the offering that are uppermost there. In this verse he changes the metaphor somewhat and uses the terms of sacrificial ritual to bring out his meaning, but his own function remains the same. It is he who offers the faith and devotion of the Philippians as a sacrifice before God, and it is he who is prepared, should necessity arise, to pour upon it the libation of his own life-blood. In support of this view it should be noted that Paul in Rom. xv. 16, 17 explicitly describes his ministry in terms of priesthood and sacrifice. He recognises in these verses that he is possessed of the priestly character and that in that character he offers the Gentiles as a sacrifice to God, sanctified and rendered acceptable by the power of the Holy Spirit. There is, therefore, no reasonable objection to taking his words in our context in their natural sense and regarding the Apostle himself as the priest offering the sacrifice.

18. *I joy, and rejoice with you all: and in the same manner do ye also joy, and rejoice with me.*

A possible translation which finds favour with some scholars is "I rejoice and congratulate you all: do ye also rejoice and congratulate me", but it is better on the whole to take the words as an injunction to mutual joy without explicitly introducing the element of congratulation. The Apostle has in view the crowning of the offering of the Philippians' faith

by the outpouring of his own life upon it. The Philippians are to rejoice because God's work in them will have been fully accomplished, the Apostle himself rejoices because he has been chosen as the instrument in God's hands to bring about this happy and blessed result. As both he and his converts have been so closely associated with this process so too must they be joint partakers in the joy which the fulfilment of God's loving purpose demands.

#### IV. THE APOSTLE'S PLANS FOR THE FUTURE, 19—30

##### (i) *The proposed visit of Timothy to Philippi, 19—24*

19 But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know  
20 your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will care  
21 <sup>1</sup>truly for your state. For they all seek their own, not the  
22 things of Jesus Christ. But ye know the proof of him,  
that, as a child *serveth* a father, so he served with me in  
23 furtherance of the gospel. Him therefore I hope to send  
forthwith, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me:  
24 but I trust in the Lord that I myself also shall come  
shortly.

<sup>1</sup> Gr. *genuinely*.

*But be of good cheer, for I hope that it may be in accordance with the will and purpose of God that I should send Timothy to you shortly, so that you may be well informed in all that concerns me and that I, on my side, may have the consolation of knowing how matters stand with you. For Timothy is unique among my present companions, and there is by my side no one who has the same sincere and unselfish care for you and your spiritual interests. The others are all engrossed in their own plans and ideas and are not dominated, as he is, by the thought of what is essential to the welfare of the Church of Christ. You know him of old and you will remember how from those early days when he was my companion at Philippi he has been like a son to me and has loyally and faithfully co-operated with me in my mission for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The issue of my trial will be decided soon, and the moment the*

*verdict has been pronounced Timothy shall come to you. Aye, and further, I trust that the Lord will be gracious to me also, and that I shall be set free to follow Timothy and come to you myself.*

19. The proposed visit of Timothy to Philippi had a double motive. We note first of all the thought of the encouragement that the coming of Timothy would produce among the Philippians, an encouragement that was all the more needed perhaps because he had just touched upon the possibility of his own death. But he himself was also to be cheered and comforted by the news that Timothy would be able to send him on his arrival at Philippi. His most intimate companion and friend was to be his representative among them and was to give them that guidance and help which his own enforced absence prevented him from giving. Also if the worst happened and death came to himself Timothy was to comfort them in their sorrow concerning his fate. It was not the first time that he had undertaken on St Paul's behalf a mission of this character. He had been sent from Athens to encourage the Church of Thessalonica in the face of persecution, 1 Thess. iii. 2, 6, and later on from Ephesus to Macedonia and thence to Corinth when the Apostle himself was unable to pay these Churches a promised visit, 1 Cor. xvi. 10.

20. *likeminded*, with Timothy and not with the Apostle, as is shown by the following verse, where the contrast is between Timothy and the other brethren who were in St Paul's immediate neighbourhood at the time.

*truly*. The Greek word meant originally "born in wedlock", hence, "not spurious", from whence it came to have the sense of "genuinely,

sincerely". The corresponding adjective denotes in the *papyri* "a lawful wedded wife" as well as "legitimate children" and is used also of "legal charges", whence we derive the meaning of "fitting, suitable". The word is also connected with "friend" in the sense of "genuine" and becomes an epithet of affectionate appreciation (as in Phil. iv. 3 and in 1 Tim. i. 2 of Timothy himself), and is frequently found in inscriptions of honour in that sense.

The adverb, as here, has the meaning of "honestly, sincerely". Cf. "will *honourably* protect the child", a quotation from a *papyrus*. In St Paul's time the word had practically outgrown its original meaning and was invariably used in its more developed sense. (See Moulton and Milligan, s.v.)

21. The tone of this verse throws light on the Apostle's comparative loneliness at the time, for it is unthinkable that he could have expressed himself in these terms if Luke and Aristarchus and other of his companions who had devoted themselves so whole-heartedly to his service had been by his side. Those who are now in his company are not in that complete sympathy with him and his aims which was characteristic of his old and faithful friends. They are more concerned with advancing their own ideas and interests, and the welfare of the Pauline Churches is not so dear to them as to the hearts of those who had been associated with him in their founding. Rome and its affairs were to them the centre of attraction and not the Churches of the distant East.

Hence the Apostle's momentary despondency and the loss of his usual buoyancy of spirit.

22. *But ye know the proof of him.* The Philippians are familiar with Timothy's character and conduct. They know how he was tested at Philippi and elsewhere and how successfully he survived the ordeal. They will remember how devotedly he served both the Gospel and the Apostle himself in Macedonia and other regions of the Pauline missionary field.

*as a child serveth a father.* Cf. 1 Tim. i. 2, "my true child in the faith": 2 Tim. i. 2, "my beloved child".

*so he served with me in furtherance of the gospel.* The Apostle's humility will not allow him to complete the sentence and to say "so he served me". He, therefore, changes its form and places Timothy on the same level as himself. They were brethren, fellow-workers, and fellow-servants of Christ.

23. Timothy was apparently to bring to Philippi the news of the verdict at the trial which St Paul expected would be pronounced shortly.

*I shall see.* The Greek word is the same as that in Heb. xii. 2, "*Looking* unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith", where it has the sense of looking away from other things and concentrating attention upon one particular object. Here the Apostle represents himself as carefully studying the course of his own affairs in order that he may gain definite and precise knowledge of his position.

24. St Paul is still in danger and the issue of the trial is doubtful, but he is confident that it will end in his release. Yet that confidence is conditional and is centred "in the Lord" as is all else in his life. It is the Lord's will and the Lord's purpose that are to be accomplished in him.

## (ii) *The return of Epaphroditus, 25—30*

25 But I counted it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier, and your  
26 <sup>1</sup>messenger and minister to my need; since he longed  
27 <sup>2</sup>after you all, and was sore troubled, because ye had heard that he was sick: for indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, that I might not have sorrow upon  
28 sorrow. I have sent him therefore the more diligently, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I  
29 may be the less sorrowful. Receive him therefore in the  
30 Lord with all joy; and hold such in honour: because for the work of <sup>3</sup>Christ he came nigh unto death, hazarding

<sup>1</sup> Gr. *apostle*.

<sup>2</sup> Many ancient authorities read *to see you all*.

<sup>3</sup> Many ancient authorities read *the Lord*.



his life to supply that which was lacking in your service toward me.

*Meanwhile as Timothy is not yet in a position to start I am sending to you without any delay Epaphroditus, my brother in the faith, my faithful helper in my work, and my comrade in the fight, who is also one of yourselves, a very apostle of your Church and the bearer of your gift to me. I consider it all the more necessary to send him because his heart was filled with longing to see you again and to return, so that by his presence among you he might dispel your anxiety concerning himself, for he knows that you were aware of his illness. For, in truth, his illness was so severe that it well nigh proved fatal, but God spared him and was also merciful to me, for the death of my loyal comrade would have been an additional burden that I could hardly have borne. I, therefore, hasten to send him on his journey that his presence among you may not only be a source of joy to you but that the knowledge that I shall gain of your satisfaction and pleasure may also bring consolation to me in my loneliness. Give him the truest of Christian welcomes and recognise at its full value the work done and the brave spirit shown by this comrade of mine. For it was owing to his devotion to Christ and His cause that he came so nearly to die. He risked his life, indeed, in performing on your behalf what you would have wished to do yourselves personally, seeing that he was the bearer of your generous gift to me.*

25. *Epaphroditus.* The name is frequently found in *papyri*. Epaphras may be a shortened form of it, and many authorities identify the Epaphroditus of our Epistle with the Epaphras mentioned in Col. iv. 12: Philemon, 23. In favour of this identification it is pointed out that they were both in St Paul's company during his Roman imprisonment and that they are both referred to by him in similar terms. Thus Epaphroditus is his "brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier" while Epaphras is "one of you, a servant of Jesus Christ" (Col. iv. 12) and his "fellow prisoner" (Philemon, 23). The main objection to this identification is that Epaphroditus is very intimately connected with Philippi and Epaphras is just as closely connected with Colossae. As the name was evidently a fairly common one there is no real difficulty in imagining

that two men of the same or similar names might have been found among St Paul's faithful and much valued companions at this time.

*my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier.* Cf. Anselm, "My brother in the faith, my fellow-worker in preaching, my fellow-soldier in adversity", a description which implies common sympathies, labours undertaken in common, and community in struggle and suffering.

*your messenger.* Lit. "your apostle". The use of this particular term shows that in St Paul's mind Epaphroditus was more than the mere bearer of the Philippians' gift to him. Underlying the word here is the idea of "one commissioned" and perhaps also the thought of the sacredness of the mission. Cf. 2 Cor. viii. 23, where similar ideas are associated with the word. "They are the messengers of the Churches, they

are the glory of God" On the strength of the attachment of the term "apostle" to Epaphroditus here the Greek Church placed him in the same rank as Barnabas, Silas, and others who held the rank of Apostles in the Church, but the context suggests "messenger", perhaps with a somewhat heightened meaning, to be the better translation. Theodoret in his Commentary on this Epistle makes him bishop of Philippi.

*minister.* The word signifies a public official, one who renders service to the state. In the LXX it is the regular term for "priest", who was the public and official servant of God in the ritual system of the Old Testament. The use of the word here, therefore, implies the sacred character of Epaphroditus' service to the Apostle. The "messenger" is commissioned by the Philippians, he is their official representative to St Paul, and his mission has sacred associations because it is concerned with the Apostle of Christ, is on behalf of the Gospel, and is the outcome of the love that arises from union with Christ.

27. *not on him only, but on me also.* The Apostle closely identifies himself with his fellow-workers. Their sicknesses, their trials are his own, and the mercy of God shown to them is vouchsafed also to him. Cf. 2 Cor. xi. 29.

*sorrow upon sorrow.* Sorrows were his daily lot; the restraint upon his activity caused by his imprisonment, the uncertainty of the prospect that lay before him, the jealousy and selfishness of many Roman Christians were burdens that were hard to bear. To lose his devoted friend and companion by death in addition to all these would have

been almost more than even his brave heart could have endured.

28. *the more diligently,* without studying his own convenience, but animated solely by the desire to relieve their anxiety.

*that...ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.* "You will rejoice because Epaphroditus is restored to you again, and my trials will not be so hard to bear when I hear of your joy".

29. *Receive him therefore in the Lord with all joy.* Cf. *Twentieth Century New Testament*, "Give him the heartiest of Christian welcomes".

*hold such in honour.* Cf. Moffatt, "value men like him".

30. *because for the work of Christ he came nigh unto death.* This expression gives no real ground for assuming, as some scholars do, that the Apostle had formed the impression that there was an element of suspicion in the attitude of the Philippians towards Epaphroditus and that this very emphatic tribute to the character of the service rendered by the latter was intended to remove any such suspicion. The stress laid on the very real anxiety caused to the Philippian Church by the news of Epaphroditus' illness is sufficient warrant that there was no lack of sympathy or appreciation on its side. The character of the service rendered is emphasised in order to show its true significance. It was not merely undertaken on their behalf, or on behalf of the Apostle himself, but was a ministry whose true meaning and purpose were only realised in Christ.

*hazarding his life.* Παράβολοι "hazard" is a gambler's word signifying the throwing of dice, a form of amusement of which the

Apostle was perhaps the frequent spectator as it was practised by the Prætorian guards. The word is not found elsewhere in the New Testament, or in any other writing of the period, and it was so rare that some copyists altered it and substituted for it the more familiar verb *παράβουλεύομαι* which explains the translation in the A. V., "not regarding his life". It is probably, however, not a word coined by St Paul, as it was assumed to be until recently, for in an inscription discovered at Olbea on the Black Sea, presumably of the second century, the word occurs in the identical participial form found here and with precisely the same meaning. "It was witnessed of him that in the interest of friendship he had *exposed himself to danger* as an advocate in legal strife by taking his clients' causes even up to emperors". In a context of this character there can be no question of the borrowing of a New Testament word, and it must, therefore, have

been current in other than Christian Churches. (Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, p. 84.) There is perhaps an interesting survival of the word in the "Parabolani" mentioned in the *Cod. Theod.*, lib. xvi. Tit. 33, who were an inferior order of Church officers fulfilling the duty of hospital attendants and nurses to the sick and poor. Vincent suggests that the name "Parabolani" attached to the order is explained by the fact that they "hazarded their lives" by coming into contact with plague and contagious diseases.

*to supply that which was lacking in your service toward me.* This is the Apostle's courteous way of expressing his gratitude both to Epaphroditus and to the Philippians; to Epaphroditus for being the bearer of the gift, to the Philippians for the gift itself, which only needed their personal attendance at the presentation to make it quite complete.

## CHAPTER III

### V. ST PAUL SOUNDS THE CALL "TO REJOICE", 1 a

#### III. 1 a. Finally, my brethren, <sup>1</sup>rejoice in the Lord.

<sup>1</sup> Or, *farewell*

*And now, my brethren, let me once again call upon you to let Christian joy have its due place in your lives.*

1 a. *Finally.* This does not necessarily mean that the Apostle is at this point approaching the end of his letter. The Greek phrase occurs in other Epistles well away from the close as e.g. in 1 Thess. iv. 1, and in the language of the period it meant little more than "now" or "there-

fore".

*rejoice in the Lord.* St Paul again strikes one of the dominant notes of the Epistle, harking back perhaps to ii. 17, 18, where the thought has been interrupted for the moment by the reference to the coming visits of Timothy and Epaphroditus.

## VI. 1b—21

At this point there is an abrupt break, and the Apostle's attention is diverted from the main purpose of the letter. The remainder of the chapter is devoted to grave and strongly worded warnings against two sets of opponents, Jews, perhaps in Rome, and a party among the Gentile Christians at Philippi, which was filled with spiritual pride and was in consequence divided into two groups, one of which claimed Christian perfection, while the other, in its contempt for the body, fell into pagan immorality.

(i) *A warning against Jews, 1b—11*(a) *A protest against Jewish national pride and exclusiveness, 1b—6*

1b. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not irk-  
 2 some, but for you it is safe. Beware of the dogs, beware of  
 3 the evil workers, beware of the concision: for we are the  
 circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in  
 4 Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh: though  
 I myself might have confidence even in the flesh: if any  
 other man <sup>1</sup>thinketh to have confidence in the flesh, I yet  
 5 more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel,  
 of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as touching  
 6 the law, a Pharisee; as touching zeal, persecuting the  
 church; as touching the righteousness which is in the law,  
 found blameless.

<sup>1</sup> Or, seemeth

*But you must forgive me if I digress for a moment and repeat some warnings that I have on former occasions addressed to you. I have no hesitation in doing this because it is your welfare and safety that I have in view. I bid you beware of those who like dogs are shameless, impure, and insolent, beware, I say, of these workers of wickedness, beware of those whose vaunted privilege is only a self-mutilation. For we Christians, and not they, are the true circumcision, we who serve God according to His will and purpose and render to Him true worship because we are filled with His Spirit, we whose one boast is that we are Christ's and not that we possess any national or material advantages, although I myself have every right to pride myself on the possession of these very privileges. No one, indeed, has a stronger claim to boast of these Jewish advantages than I have, because there is no privilege which a Jew values that is not mine. A true member of the covenant people and no proselyte, I was circumcised on the eighth day, I come of good old Israelitish stock, and belong to the tribe*



*which furnished the nation with its first King, the tribe which remained loyal to the house of David and has kept its strain pure and undefiled throughout the ages. In point of descent I was born of Hebrew parents on both sides. To come to acquired privileges, I am a Pharisee, a member of the strictest of all Jewish sects, in point of zeal I persecuted the Church of Christ, and as touching the righteousness as it is conceived by the law I was beyond reproach.*

1 b. *To write the same things.* Many attempts have been made to explain the expression "the same things" from the contents of the Epistle itself, and Moffatt (see *Expositor*, VIII. xii. p. 346) is still of opinion that a good case can be made out for this view, but none of the explanations is very convincing. It is better, therefore, to seek for an explanation outside the Epistle, either in warnings addressed orally or in some previous letter or letters to the Philippians, and to confine the reference to the impassioned outbreak which follows.

*to me indeed is not irksome.* An epistolary formula which Souter paraphrases, "I do not hesitate".

*but for you it is safe.* "I do not hesitate to revert to an old subject if by doing that I protect you".

With the thought of the verse as a whole cf. Dr Johnson in *The Rambler*, "It is not sufficiently considered that men more frequently require to be reminded than informed".

2. *Beware.* The threefold repetition of this word marks the urgency and intensity of the warning.

*dogs, evil workers, the concision.* These are not three separate groups of opponents, Gentiles, Jewish Christians, and Jews, but one homogeneous group composed of Jews, pure and simple, described under three categories.

*dogs.* The pariah was the most contemptible of all creatures in the

East and the term "dog" as applied to others was a symbol of what was ignoble and mean. In this respect its use was by no means confined to expressing the attitude of the Jew towards the Gentile but it was a general term of opprobrium in the Eastern world and remains so to this day. It is possible, however, that the Apostle may here be consciously applying to Jews the particular term of reproach they applied to Gentiles. In the New Testament the "sow" and the "dog" are coupled together as representing apostates from the Church. Cf. 2 St Peter ii. 22, and Rev. xxii. 15, where "dogs" are associated with sorcerers, fornicators, murderers, and idolaters who are outside the city, i.e. with those corrupted by the foulest vices of the pagan world. Here perhaps the main thought is that of the shamelessness and insolence of his Jewish enemies.

*evil workers.* "They are workers of wickedness even when they work". If the identity of the party condemned here was what we have assumed it to be and it was composed of Jews who were harrying the Apostle to death, the "evil" they were "working" might have a specific reference to their relentless hostility towards himself.

*the concision.* This word is not found elsewhere in the New Testament and it is deliberately employed here as a play upon the Greek for "circumcision". It is adequately

represented by the English word "mutilation". As the designation of a party it denotes those whose boasted privilege is after all a mere bodily mutilation, without any moral or spiritual significance or effect.

3. *we are the circumcision*, i.e. those who have put away all bodily uncleanness in the power of Jesus Christ. Cf. Col. ii. 11, "In whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ". The Christian Church is the true Israel of God, inheriting all its privileges and conferring all its blessings. For St Paul's doctrine of the Church as the New Israel cf. Int. pp. lxxxv-lxxxviii.

*who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.* The Apostle bases this claim on three grounds.

(1) *who worship by the Spirit of God.* By the use of the term "worship" the Apostle employs that which in the LXX denotes the service rendered to Jehovah by the Chosen People and in so doing transfers to the New Israel the worship and homage paid to God which was the proud privilege and monopoly of Israel of old. It was the Church's possession of the Spirit which formed its primary claim to be able to worship God according to His will, that Spirit whose outpouring upon the New Israel had been promised by the prophets. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church gave it life and power and love and so enabled it to offer to God true and acceptable worship, cf. St John iv. 23: Rom. xii. 1: 1 Pet. ii. 5. In all these

passages there is the same implied contrast with Jewish worship as here.

(2) *and glory in Christ Jesus.* For "glory" see notes on i. 26 and ii. 16. The Christian Church does not pride itself on any national or ceremonial privilege. Its province is as wide as the love and redeeming grace of Jesus Christ Himself, to whom adequate worship can only be rendered by a society as wide as the world itself.

(3) *and have no confidence in the flesh.* "Flesh" is here the antithesis both to "Christ Jesus" and the "Spirit". What the Apostle meant by the term is explained very fully in the two following verses. It included all that a Jew valued most, all that was the source of his vaunted righteousness, all that led to the familiar Jewish contempt for those who stood outside the covenant, but with special emphasis on the thought that the Jew's confidence was primarily based on the fleshly act of circumcision which widened out into confidence in privilege and position. The phrase also indicates the confidence founded on one's own effort to attain righteousness as contrasted with that rooted in the consciousness that righteousness is only attainable in union with Christ and through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit.

4. St Paul enters here upon his spiritual autobiography. The repetition of the "I" which occurs no less than fourteen times in the passage shows the strong personal element running through it. He begins by a description of himself as Saul the Pharisee and gives a catalogue of the privileges and advantages which were the pride and glory of the Pharisaic Jew and so proves that even from his opponents'

point of view, which he assumes all through this portion of his defence, he had a better claim to boast than most of them, were he so inclined. Cf. 2 Cor. xi. 22 ff.

5. (1) *His privileges by birth.* *circumcised on the eighth day*, and therefore a pure Jew, a member of the covenant people by birth, and not a proselyte.

*of the stock of Israel.* Cf. Bengel, "Born of Rachel, a legitimate wife, and not of a handmaid" and therefore of good Israelitish stock.

*of the tribe of Benjamin.* Born of a tribe of great renown in the national history, of a tribe which gave Israel its first King, which remained loyal to the royal line of David and preserved its original strain with remarkable purity.

*a Hebrew of Hebrews*, i.e. a Hebrew son of Hebrew parents and stock. It has been thought that this expression refers to the fact that his family was free from the Hellenistic tendencies which operated so powerfully upon the Jews of the Diaspora, but Philo, who was a Hellenist of the Hellenists, is described by Josephus as a "Hebrew", which argues against this view.

(2) *His privileges by choice and training.*

*as touching the law, a Pharisee.* A member of the sect which was strictest in maintaining the law and whose very existence was bound up

with the observance of the law in all its minutiae.

6. *as touching zeal, persecuting the church.* In his zeal on behalf of the national faith of which they considered themselves the pillars and guardians he had outdistanced them all. In his hatred and persecution of the Christian Church he had proved himself a very Zealot. Cf. Acts xxii. 3-5, xxvi. 9-11, and Rom. x. 2, "For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge".

*as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless.* The claim to "blamelessness" from a Pharisaic point of view was by no means uncommon as we learn from the story of "the rich young man" in St Luke xviii. 21. There was, therefore, nothing unusual or presumptuous in the Apostle's assertion that in his outward conduct there had been found neither fault nor failure. There is no contradiction between his statement here and the description of his inward struggle in Rom. vii. 7-23. It was not the infraction of the outward demands of the Jewish law in its ethical and ceremonial aspects that filled his soul with torment, but the sense of sin in his innermost being. Neither is it inconsistent with 1 Tim. i. 13-14, because there he is regarding his past in Judaism from the Christian and not from the Pharisaic standpoint as he is doing here.

(b) *A defence of the Christian position as illustrated by his own experience, more especially by his conversion, which involved the surrender of his privileges as a son of the covenant and the abandonment of the righteousness which is of the law and made him a recipient of the righteousness which is of God by faith, issuing in the knowledge of Christ and of the power of His resurrection and in the hope of final victory, 7—11*

7   Howbeit what things were <sup>1</sup>gain to me, these have I  
8 counted loss for Christ. Yea verily, and I count all things  
to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ  
Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things,  
9 and do count them but <sup>2</sup>dung, that I may gain Christ, and  
be found in him, <sup>3</sup>not having a righteousness of mine own,  
*even* that which is of the law, but that which is through  
faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God <sup>4</sup>by faith:  
10 that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection,  
and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed  
11 unto his death; if by any means I may attain unto the  
resurrection from the dead.

<sup>1</sup> Gr. gains.

<sup>2</sup> Or, refuse

<sup>3</sup> Or, not having as my righteousness that which is of the law

<sup>4</sup> Gr. upon.

*But all that I used to regard as privileges of great value in my old life I have now learnt to consider as positive disadvantages in view of my relation to Christ. Aye, and further, I came to regard not only the privileges I enjoyed as a Jew but all I possessed in the world as a dead weight to be rid of compared with the inestimable blessings I gained when I came to know Christ; for I abandoned my all for His sake and learnt to regard it as mere refuse, if by the transaction I might gain Christ and be completely identified with Him and be His at the last day, clothed no longer with a righteousness based upon the performance of duties imposed upon me by the law but with a righteousness which is the very gift of God and the reward of faith, attainable only through faith in Christ. The righteousness that I speak of consists in knowing Christ through and through and in experiencing in myself the power of His resurrection, and in being so closely identified with Him that I share in His sufferings and death, so that I may perhaps reach the very crown of my hope and desire, "the resurrection from the dead", when I shall have complete and unbroken fellowship with Him.*



7. *what things were gain to me.* All that was held in high esteem from the Pharisaic standpoint, and, therefore, the whole series of Jewish privileges enumerated in the preceding verses.

*have I counted.* The Greek tense here indicates an action performed at a definite point of time, which must, therefore, be identified with the Apostle's conversion, when he once and for all abandoned the Pharisaic position.

*loss.* The word signifies that the much-vaunted Pharisaic prerogatives were not only worthless but that they were positively ruinous, because they were based upon utterly wrong principles and turned the eye of the soul in the wrong direction in its search for righteousness.

*for Christ,* "in order that I may gain Christ" or "in comparison with what I found in Christ when I came to know Him".

8. The picture in the Apostle's mind is that of a man with a pile of treasure in front of him—gold, jewels—who refuses it and will have nothing to do with it and actually spurns it and tramples it under foot as too contemptible to be thought of if he may only gain Christ and be found in Him (Sanday, *Expository Times*, xiv. p. 487).

*I count.* The tense here carries with it the sense of a process not only begun at a definite moment but continued all through the Apostle's Christian life.

*all things.* The act of surrender is now extended so as to include not only the "gains" of the preceding verse, but every earthly advantage and privilege; comfort, friends, family associations, all that the world held dear to him before he "took up his

cross" and became a follower of Jesus Christ.

*for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.* The idea is that of a business transaction, exchanging what was worthless and ruinous for what was a treasure of surpassing worth ("the excellency of").

*the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.* "To know" signifies for St Paul the whole of his Christian experience. It reaches far beyond mere intellectual knowledge, includes faith, service, and sacrifice, and is analogous to the familiar Pauline phrase "to be in Christ". It is the mystical knowledge by means of which he becomes one with Christ, so that his whole life is lived in Christ and he has no consciousness of being, apart from Christ. It is a knowledge that is constantly developing as the intimacy with the Master becomes closer until it reaches its culmination when "he shall know even as he is known". Such knowledge, therefore, constitutes the whole secret of the Christian life.

*Christ Jesus my Lord.* The full title and the use of the personal pronoun emphasise St Paul's claim that in his *own* experience he had learnt to know Christ in the full significance of His Being. His knowledge was no longer confined to the exalted Christ whom he had seen on the road to Damascus, but included all that the life, teaching, and sufferings of the Jesus who had walked on earth meant in the purpose of God for the redemption of mankind.

*for whom I suffered the loss of all things.* The threefold emphasis upon the Apostle's renunciation, twice in this verse and once in the

preceding verse, reminds us of ii. 7, 8, where the self-abnegation of Christ is described stage by stage as well as in its absolute completeness. Ramsay (*St Paul the Traveller*, p. 310) suggests that St Paul had been disowned by his family on becoming a Christian and reduced from a position of wealth and influence in his nation to poverty and contempt. This would give a deeper force to the words here.

*that I may gain Christ.* Not "win" a prize as in the A.V. but "gain" a profit.

9. *and be found in him.* Moffatt has an interesting note in *Expository Times*, xxiv. p. 46 on the analogous use of this phrase and idea in Epictetus, Diss. 3rd Book, chap. v. where the great Stoic teacher says, "What would you like to be doing when you are overtaken (by death)? For my part may I be overtaken when I am attending to nothing else than to my own will, seeking to be imperturbable, unhindered, uncompelled, free. I want to be *found* practising this so that I may be able to say to God 'I have been ill when it was Thy will, so have others, but I was willing it should be so, I became poor at Thy will but I rejoiced in it.... Now it is Thy will that I depart from the assembly of all men; I go, giving all thanks to Thee that Thou hast counted me to be worthy to join in this assembly of Thine and to behold Thy works and to follow Thy governing providence'. *May death overtake me* when I am thinking of this, when I am writing, reading, about this". Moffatt sees a very striking resemblance in this passage to Phil. iv. 10-18 and suggests that St Paul uses the phrase "to be found" in the same sense as Epictetus does, viz. "to be

found when surprised by death". While we may agree that this thought was in the Apostle's mind and that he regarded "being found in Christ" as the very crown of his Christian life it is doubtful whether he confines his "being found" to the final act and consummation. The "gaining Christ" and the "being found in Christ" are obvious parallels, and the general trend of the passage is in favour of the idea that he has in mind his Christian course as a whole, from the day when he came "to know Christ" to that day when Christ's work in him shall be consummated in final union with Himself.

*righteousness.* The Apostle uses this term here in its widest sense as including not only the idea of right relation to God but also that of "right living", the life lived in Christ according to the will of God through the power of the Holy Spirit. He begins by describing the righteousness which he claims to have possessed from the Pharisaic standpoint. According to the strictest Jewish view he already stood in the right relation to God as a member of the covenant people, and his careful observance of the law and its demands proclaimed him "righteous" in actual practice.

*through faith in Christ,...of God by faith.* The righteousness of the Christian is primarily the gift of God and not the result of any effort of his own, and is conditioned only by the exercise of faith, faith in Christ and in the redeeming power of His grace and love and not by any dependence upon law and its observance.

10. *that I may know him.* This is the completion of the process, the first stage of which is marked in v. 8. His Christian life opened with the

recognition of the crucified and risen Jesus as his Lord, it will reach its complete fruition only when that knowledge is perfected, when he will know Christ as fully as God knows him and when his whole being becomes Christ's through His power working within him.

*and the power of his resurrection.*

The Apostle goes on to explain what the knowledge of Christ consists in. It is to know and realise in himself "the power of His resurrection". His own deepest spiritual experiences must correspond with the vital facts in Christ's scheme of redemption. He must die to sin and be raised to newness of life, and the power that raised Jesus from the dead must be the power to raise him from spiritual death to a new and abiding life, in and through the risen and exalted Christ.

*and the fellowship of his sufferings.* In the world of fact the order found here should be reversed because Christ suffered and died before He rose again, but in St Paul's own experience it was the resurrection that was the fundamental event, the starting point of his life in Christ. It was the vision of the risen and living Christ that cut short his career of persecution, convinced him that "he was kicking against the pricks", and turned his face in the right direction. It was only after much meditation and reflection that he realised the significance of the death of Christ and learnt that he too had to die like his Master and "to know the fellowship of His sufferings" if he was to share in the power of His risen life. It is important to note that all through this verse the Apostle is moving in the plane of the spiritual and that it is the experience of the

Christian in the light of the Cross that he has in mind; the death to sin and the assurance that, because he had shared with Christ at this point, he will share with Him all through, in the risen life and in the final exaltation. The passage has been interpreted otherwise as if it referred to St Paul's bodily sufferings on behalf of Christ and the language has been compared with Col. i. 24, "filling up on my part that which was lacking of the affliction of Christ in my flesh". The next clause "becoming conformed unto His death" has also been explained as referring to the climax of the Apostle's sufferings, "dying as He died", literally. There may be involved in the passage the thought of bodily suffering, but its whole tone and its language when compared with that of the Apostle elsewhere show that primarily the Apostle is thinking of the spiritual process in his own heart and in that of every sincere Christian. The whole process is conceived as arising from the union of the Christian with Christ, which involved a mystical sharing in all Christ's experiences.

*becoming conformed unto his death.* Cf. Rom. vi. 5. This clause carries on and defines the reference in the preceding sentence. The fellowship in Christ's sufferings means dying with Christ, and the use of the present participle implies that the dying is a continuous process which only ends when physical death supervenes and closes the struggle with sin.

11. In this and the following verses the Apostle seems to take up a position which appears to contradict the statement concerning himself in the passage we have been considering. In v. 9 he describes

himself as having gained the righteousness of God, whereas here and in the three following verses he implies that he has not attained righteousness and that the crown is still in front. He has yet before him a hard and difficult journey before the prize is finally won. But the two statements are not really contradictory. His first statement sets forth God's ideal and loving purpose and aim for all who are in Christ, the second emphasises the dangers and difficulties of the course, the need for constant watching and prayer, the perils arising from false confidence, and the necessity of continual dependence upon the grace

of God in Christ Jesus, if the journey is to be safely accomplished and the final goal reached.

*the resurrection from the dead.* This is the consummation of the whole process of redemption outlined in *vv.* 9, 10. The apparent distrust here is not distrust of the power of Christ, but the distrust inspired by the humility which comes from the consciousness of his own weakness as he faces the supreme heights to be scaled. This particular form of the phrase, "the resurrection *which is from the dead*" shows that the Apostle has in view here the resurrection of the righteous only.

(ii) *A protest against the "spiritual" party in Philippi, which was divided into two sections, 12—21*

(a) *Those who claimed that they were perfect, 12—16. The lesson is pressed home by an appeal to his own strivings and gradual progress in Christ.*

12 Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may <sup>1</sup>apprehend that for which also I was apprehended by Christ Jesus.  
 13 Brethren, I count not myself <sup>2</sup>yet to have apprehended: but one thing *I do*, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before,  
 14 I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the <sup>3</sup>high  
 15 calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye are otherwise minded, even this shall God reveal unto you:  
 16 only, whereunto we have already attained, by that same *rule*—let us walk.

<sup>1</sup> Or, apprehend, seeing that also I was apprehended

<sup>2</sup> Many ancient authorities omit yet.

<sup>3</sup> Or, upward

*And you must not misunderstand me here. I make no claim, as some among you seem to do, to have reached the goal or to have attained to all*



that is involved in gaining and knowing Christ. I am still only a competitor in the arena, I am still running my race and pressing eagerly towards the winning post, hoping that one day I may grasp the victor's prize which was Christ's very purpose for me when He laid hold of me. Let me warn those among you who are filled with spiritual pride and assurance that I do not reckon the prize to be mine yet. My one consuming thought is not to be discouraged by my failures in the past or to be over-elated by my successes but, like the wise runner, to keep my eyes fixed on the goal and with every nerve strained to the uttermost to reach the end and to win the prize, which is that calling of God which bids me upward and shall lead me to the heights of blessedness because I am Christ's and He is mine. And even though there be among us those who deem themselves to have gained the prize of perfection in Christ yet even for them it is well to cherish the principle of humility and distrust of self. And if there is a difference of opinion between us with regard to this question of perfection God will in His time set you right on the point. The one thing essential for all is that we should keep the course that leads straight to the goal.

12. The Apostle at this point turns away from the Jews who were harrying him at Rome and fixes his attention upon a section of the Philippian Church which was in its tendencies identical with the party in the Church of Corinth which arrogated to itself the title of "spiritual", was filled with overweening pride, and claimed spiritual perfection. Cf. 1 Cor. iii., iv. He counters the views of the "perfectionists" by an appeal to his own example and to his experience of the gradual and difficult progress of the Christian towards the final goal, and so explains the hesitation expressed with regard to his own ultimate success in v. 11, "if by any means I may attain to the resurrection from the dead".

*perfect.* See note on i. 6.

*I press on.* Lit. "I pursue". Cf. an extract from a *papyrus*, "A patriarch fleeing into the desert was pursued by a lion". A Christian amulet of early date is inscribed "Fly hateful spirit! Christ pursues thee", and in both cases the Greek is identical with the word here. St

Paul is pursuing the object which is not yet within his grasp.

*I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended by Christ Jesus.* An alternative rendering is given in the Margin of the R.V., "seeing that also I was apprehended". The two renderings respectively may be paraphrased as follows: (1) "That I may grasp that which was in the mind of Christ when He grasped me". (2) "That I may grasp it, because I have been grasped by Christ". The general sense of the passage is much the same in either case and both renderings point to the fact that the security for final attainment rests with Christ. It is the purpose of Christ in the Apostle that will be accomplished and it is the power of Christ granted to him at his conversion and continued all through his Christian course that will crown this with triumph.

13. *Brethren.* A direct appeal to the "spiritual" party at Philippi.

*I count.* This is a characteristic Pauline word which is used no less than twenty-nine times in

the Epistles (without including the instances where it occurs in quotations from the Old Testament) and only three times elsewhere in the New Testament. It is a metaphor from keeping accounts, implying a setting down on the credit and debit side. "The arithmetical factors of St Paul's spiritual life were so sure that he felt perfectly certain of their validity and how far they would take him. Whatever he had accomplished by means of them thus far he knew well that there were still greater victories to be won and heights to be attained. His sums were not all done, "I do not reckon that I have grasped" anything. So he pressed forward that by the faithful use of the same spiritual arithmetic would come the same power and blessing in the future". (W. H. Griffith Thomas, *Expository Times*, xvii. p. 213.)

*but one thing I do.* A remarkable illustration of the concentration of purpose in St Paul which was yet compatible with a multitude of other interests and did not narrow his sympathies or create a self-centred spirit.

*forgetting.* The Greek word is used in the "Mysteries" to signify the abandonment of the past on the part of the mystic with a view to further advance in knowledge and consecration, and this would seem to be the approximate sense in which St Paul employs the term here.

*forgetting the things which are behind.* The past may discourage by its failures or produce over-confidence by its successes. To dwell upon it unduly is, therefore, a source of spiritual weakness. The past which St Paul is thinking of here may be either his old life in Judaism or his experiences as a Christian up

to the present moment. The use of the phrase "the things which are behind" elsewhere in the New Testament as e.g. in St Luke ix. 62, St John vi. 66, where the contexts point clearly to a relapse into Jewish life and practice, favours the former interpretation, but the Apostle at this point is no longer concerned with the old Jewish life, which has had no place in his thought after *v.* 9, and his whole mind is now bent upon his life in Christ. It is the failures and successes of his Christian course that are not to hinder or hamper him in running and completing the race that is set before him. The metaphor is taken from the race, the most famous of all the competitions in the Grecian games, where looking back over the shoulder as the end of the race drew near was so often fatal to victory. Cf. the story of Atalanta.

*stretching forward to the things which are before,* like the runner in the race with head thrown forward and body bent towards the goal.

14. *the goal.* Originally a mark aimed at by an archer. Hence "the end in view".

*the prize.* The Greek word is rarely found in literature but is common enough in the *papyri* where it is frequently used to denote the prize or reward for successful achievement.

*of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* Lit. "the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus", explaining what the prize consists of. Cf. Heb. iii. 1, "partakers of a heavenly calling". The expression involves two ideas. The call is from God in heaven, and its motive is to raise men up to heaven.

*in Christ Jesus.* Cf. Heb. xii. 2, "Jesus the author and *perfecter* of our faith". Col. i. 27, "Christ in you,

the hope of glory". It is through Christ that the call comes and it is in perfect union with Christ that the response to the call is made possible.

15. *Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded.* This and the following verse constitute one of the few passages in the Epistle that are difficult to interpret. The Apostle's meaning is by no means easy to determine, and before we can arrive at a clear understanding of what he does say we must first of all decide upon the sense we attach to the word "perfect" in the context. If it means here what it obviously denotes in v. 12, i.e. complete spiritual maturity, St Paul can only have used the word ironically, because the whole point of the discussion in the preceding verses is to accentuate the fact that neither he nor any other Christian has yet arrived at that stage of perfection. We should then translate "Let those of us who boast of our 'perfection' be thus minded". If, on the other hand, the Apostle is speaking in a serious vein the term must denote a different stage of growth from that contemplated in v. 12 and point to a relative perfection. In that case the passage would be rendered, "Let those of us who have left the stage of childhood and are full grown men in the faith, but have not yet arrived at perfect maturity, be thus minded". I fail, however, to see any reason for assuming that St Paul used the term in two different senses within the limits of a passage of this length, and the expression in question can be interpreted quite satisfactorily by giving the word "perfect" its normal meaning. St Paul is here speaking in the spirit of irony. "Even supposing some of us are as perfect as we claim to be it will do us no harm

to exercise humility and distrust of ourselves". His point is not what these particular Philippian Christians actually are but what they claim to be.

*be thus minded*, i.e. let them preserve the frame of mind that he has outlined in the preceding passage, which involves humility and the consciousness of the need of never-ceasing effort which are the marks of his own Christian endeavour.

*and if in anything ye are otherwise minded*: "if we are not in complete agreement upon this question of 'perfection', if we differ as to the precise stage of spiritual development we have reached".

*even this shall God reveal unto you.* "God will in His own good time set you right in the matter. He will reveal to you exactly where you stand". St Paul assumes that they are wrong in their view of Christian perfection, but maintains that, in any case, humility should be the mark of the most mature Christian as it was of Christ Himself, and promises that for the humble-minded God has still richer treasures of knowledge in store.

16. *only, whereunto we have already attained, by that same rule let us walk.* Lit. "whereunto we have attained let us walk in the same". The translation in the A.V. "let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing" was based on a text which included explanatory glosses interpolated from Gal. vi. 16, "as many as shall walk by this rule", and Phil. ii. 4, "be of the same mind". The suggestion conveyed in the former of the two glosses was adopted by the Revisers, but quite unnecessarily, as the Apostle's meaning is clear and complete without the intrusion of the extraneous word



"rule". The Greek στοιχεῖν means "to walk in a straight line", and in view of this we should, therefore, translate, "whatever be the stage of development we have reached let us

keep to the line". St Paul has still in mind the runner in the race and is emphasising the vital necessity of keeping to the course if the goal is to be reached and the prize won.

(b) *The protest against the "spiritual" party is continued but is now directed against another section of it, those who affected to despise the body and in consequence fell into pagan immorality, 17-19*

17 Brethren, be ye imitators together of me, and mark them  
18 which so walk even as ye have us for an ensample. For  
many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you  
even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of  
19 Christ: whose end is perdition, whose god is the belly,  
and *whose* glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.

*I have warned you against one dangerous tendency which I hear is gaining ground among you and I now put you on your guard against a still more dangerous peril which threatens you. As a Christian community take me for your example so far as I follow Christ and pay special heed to those who walk in our steps. For there are among you some who bear the name of Christ, of whom I have warned you before and do so now with tears in my eyes, whose way of life is hostile to the Cross of Christ, whose course must end in spiritual ruin. For their only motive is the satisfaction of their animal nature and they actually pride themselves on their shameful excesses and, though claiming spiritual prerogatives, all that they are really concerned with is of the earth, earthy.*

17. *Brethren, be ye imitators together of me.*

*together.* This may mean either united action among themselves, i.e. "be united in your imitation of me", or joint action with the Apostle, "be imitators along with me in imitating Christ" (Bengel), cf. 1 Cor. xi. 1.

*and mark them which so walk even as ye have us for an ensample.* The addition of this clause supports the former of the two interpretations of the preceding sentence and suggests that the exhortation is to

united action among themselves.

"There are some among you who already follow my example. Unite with them in their imitation of me".

18. The warning here is couched in much more explicit terms than that addressed to the other wing of the "spiritual" party which was prone to spiritual pride and false confidence, but was apparently above reproach in its moral life. It was the antinomian tendency that constituted the grave and pressing danger in the Philippian Church.



The "spiritual" party as a whole was Gentile in character and this is particularly true of the group that is condemned in this and the following verse, because Jews, with all their faults, were renowned for the order and decency of their outward conduct. The Gentile Christians, on the other hand, were in constant danger because of their surroundings and of their close contact with heathen immoral life. Cf. 2 Cor. vi. 14-18.

*of whom I told you often.* The effort to counteract the tendency of the convert from paganism to relapse into a heathen course of life while still professing Christianity was an unceasing factor in missionary preaching. The Epistles to the Corinthians witness to the grave difficulties which St Paul had to face from this quarter.

*even weeping.* "The tears of the Apostle have explained him to us. The power of his Apostleship was in his personal Christianity, and his personal Christianity was a Christianity of tears. By tears of grief he subdued others by gaining their sympathy; by tears of love he gained love, and by tears of tenderness he persuaded others by the simplicity of his Gospel" (Adolphe Monod, Sermon on "The tears of St Paul"), cf. Acts xx. 31; 2 Cor. ii. 4.

*enemies of the cross of Christ.* The Cross is, in this Epistle, the crowning point of our Lord's humiliation and obedience. For a professing Christian to indulge in sins of the flesh and to plunge into immorality was to wage war against all that was signified by the Cross and a direct denial of our Lord's teaching. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me". The fact that the Apostle in 1 Cor. i. 23, speaks of the

Cross as an offence to the Jews does not necessarily imply that it was an offence to none but Jews and that, in consequence, the Christians arraigned here must have been Jewish Christians. St Paul's picture of the outward life of those condemned in this passage is a fairly clear indication that they were Gentile and not Jewish Christians.

19. *end.* The word *τέλος* implies more than mere cessation and includes the idea of the attainment of a goal. Hence we might translate "the natural result and the end", cf. Rom. vi. 21, "the end—the full out-working—of these things is death".

*perdition.* The loss of everything that makes life worth living, exclusion from the Kingdom of God and the glorious eternal home of the righteous, cf. Rev. xxii. 15. The close of an ancient Coptic spell in a magical *papyrus* reads, "give you over to blank chaos in utter destruction".

*whose god is the belly.* A general term implying grossness and sensuality and involving a view of life limited by the body and its basest needs.

*whose glory is in their shame,* "who pride themselves on those very sins of which as Christians they should be deeply ashamed". For a similar thought with reference to pagan life, cf. Rom. i. 32.

*who mind earthly things.* An allusion to the doctrine held by the so-called "spiritual" as to the indifference of the body and its uses. "Your vaunted spirituality is after all but a cloak for sin and your philosophy is only an excuse for immorality and self-indulgence. With all your talk of high thinking and your assumption of superiority your mind is essentially concerned with things of earth and your soul seldom

risers above it". We have here perhaps early traces of the Gnostic doctrine which viewed the body with

contempt and led to asceticism on the one hand and to grave libertinism on the other.

- (c) *The incompatibility of this sensual life with the position of Christians as a colony of heaven, whose Saviour is in heaven, and with the future glory awaiting the body,*  
20—21

20 For our <sup>1</sup>citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we  
21 wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, *that it may be conformed to the body of his glory*, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself.

<sup>1</sup> Or, *commonwealth*

*For we Christians must bear in mind that we are now only a colony and that heaven is our mother-State, and that from this far land of ours we look to heaven for the coming of a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change and make anew this body of ours that is now subject to weakness, decay, and death and make it like the body that He wears in glory, through the working of the Divine power that is His, whereby all things are made to acknowledge His supremacy.*

20. *For*, either in contrast to "mind earthly things" or, better, as a protest against the whole conception of the Christian life delineated in the preceding paragraph.

*is*, "is in its essence". The Greek word is the same as that in ii. 6, "*being in the form of God*" and denotes that the "citizenship" is the possession of the Christian now and not something that is to be his in the world beyond.

*citizenship*. The original means strictly "what one does as a citizen" from which it came to have the meaning of constitution, citizenship, and franchise and in process of time was used to indicate the state or commonwealth. It is used occasionally to denote a colony or settle-

ment from a mother city whose organisation it copied, and this would seem to give the best meaning here (cf. Souter, s.v.). See Moffatt's translation, "We are a colony of heaven", a rendering which suggests the transitoriness of our sojourn on earth, the glory of the State to which we belong, and our enjoyment of the privileges which are inherent in our mother-State, as well as the momentous duties and responsibilities which are incumbent upon those who are its citizens. This sense of the term would make a special appeal to the Philippians whose proudest boast was that they were Romans and whose city was in some of its most notable features a miniature of Rome, cf. Acts xvi. 21.

*from whence.* The reference is not to "heaven" as would appear from the R.V., but to the "colony". The Saviour is expected to come from heaven, but the hope and expectation of His coming are cherished in the colony on earth.

*we wait.* The original is a rare Greek word which means "we await eagerly" and is possibly a word manufactured by St Paul himself. It is used in the apocryphal "Acts of Paul" in the sense of "waiting for" and is found in the New Testament, outside the Pauline Epistles, in Heb. ix. 28, 1 St Peter iii. 20, where in both instances it has probably been borrowed from St Paul.

*Saviour.* This is a word which constantly occurs in the LXX as the translation of a term closely associated with God, cf. Isaiah xlv. 21, "a just God and a Saviour". It also occupied an important place in Greek religion. Zeus, Apollo, Asclepius, Hermes, were all worshipped under the title of "Saviour". It was afterwards applied to heroic men and particularly to the successors of Alexander, Ptolemies and Seleucids. Finally it was again and again ascribed to the Emperor Augustus, cf. an inscription in the island of Philae, where Augustus is spoken of as "He who arose a Saviour, Zeus most mighty". The designation emphasised the clemency and grace of the Emperor, qualities which were peculiarly valued by subjects in the Roman Provinces. The "Saviour" in this sense was the helper in time of need, the bringer of deliverance. Hadrian is also called in an inscription (Dittenberg, Syll. 383) "the Saviour who rescued and nurtured his own Hellas". The language of the New Testament in such passages as St John iv. 12, "the

Saviour of the world", and 2 Tim. i. 10, "the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ" suggests a more or less conscious adoption of language and ideas from the Imperial cult, on the part of Christian writers. The combination of "citizenship" and "Saviour" in this verse also seems to point to an analogous influence. The supreme test of loyalty for citizens of the Empire was adherence to the worship of the Imperial ruler who was Lord, Saviour, and God. The Christian commonwealth also had its Lord and Saviour, but they both in reality belong to the unseen world. (See H. A. A. Kennedy in *Expositor*, vi. vii. p. 300, to whom I am indebted for this note.)

The position of "Saviour" in the sentence is emphatic. "A Saviour it is that we look for, even our Lord Jesus Christ".

*the Lord Jesus Christ.* The full title signifies the coming of our Lord in the plenitude of His power and glory and points, therefore, to His second coming.

21. *who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation.* St Paul has no sympathy with those who take the low view of the body and its functions that was characteristic of the Stoic and other philosophies. It is always regarded by him with reverence, it is "the temple of the Holy Ghost" and is to share fully in the redemption through Christ. It is a "body of humiliation" because while on earth it is subject to weakness, suffering, and death. This mortal is, however, to put on immortality and the weakness of the body of humiliation is to be transformed into the power and glory of the "spiritual body" while still retaining its personal identity and sense of individuality, cf. 1 Cor. xv.



*fashion anew, conformed.* It is significant that in these two compound verbs there should be found the nouns "fashion" and "form" which the Apostle had already used in ii. 6, 7. There he applies them to Christ Himself, here they are used of the human body.

*humiliation, glory.* Equally significant is the use here of the very terms which St Paul employed with reference to the humiliation and exaltation of Christ. The human body which has shared in the humiliation of Christ is also to be partaker of His glory.

*the working.* The word is used

in the New Testament only of the superhuman power of God or the devil. It is used of the power of God in Ephes. i. 19, iii. 7, iv. 16, Col. ii. 12, and of the power of Satan in 2 Thess. ii. 9. It involves the thought of "efficiency arising from power". Cf. 1 Cor. xv. 26 f., where the subjection of the world-power is to usher in the glory of Christ.

*unto himself.* The aim and end of our redemption, body and soul, is the service and glory of Christ. It is the outcome of His will and its final purpose is the full accomplishment of that gracious will.

## CHAPTER IV

VII. (a) *The Apostle now takes up the main thread of the letter which had been abruptly broken off at iii. 1a and once again impresses upon the Philippians the need of steadfastness and unity, mentioning in particular two women, Euodia and Syntyche, who were probably the source of the disunion which troubled the Church, 1—3*

IV. 1 Wherefore, my brethren beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my beloved.  
2 I exhort Euodia, and I exhort Syntyche, to be of the  
3 same mind in the Lord. Yea, I beseech thee also, true yokefellow, help these women, for they laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

*And now let me once again revert to the subject I was discussing when I was interrupted and make a final appeal to you to stand firm and steadfast in the faith with Christ as your strength and stay, for you are my brethren whom I love and long to see, my joy and pledge of victory. I beseech Euodia and I beseech Syntyche to compose their differences in the spirit of the Lord, and I entreat thee also, my true comrade, to take a hand in making peace between these women, for they ought to be helped seeing*



*that they contended at my side on behalf of the Gospel, as did Clement and many another helper of mine, whose names are written in the book of life.*

1. *Wherefore.* The connection here is not with what immediately precedes, because at this point the Apostle seems to lose sight of the particular section whose tendencies he has just condemned and is now concerned with the Church as a whole. The "wherefore" then looks back to the earlier part of the Epistle where he has been inculcating the need of steadfastness and unity.

*my brethren beloved and longed for.* An impressive expression of the Apostle's sense of loss caused by his enforced separation from them. One of his severest trials as a prisoner was that his bonds prevented his free movement among the Churches. Because they were his "beloved" they were "missed" by him. For "longed for" cf. i. 8, 26: Rom. i. 11, xv. 23.

*my joy and crown.* A favourite expression with St Paul. Cf. 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20, which enables us to realise the exact thought in the Apostle's mind here, for the reference in the verse quoted is definitely to our Lord's second coming. It, therefore, completes the idea contained in ii. 16, "that I did not run in vain neither labour in vain". The Churches that he founded and built up in Christ are to be the proof and reward of his labour in that day when Christ shall test every man's work.

*crown.* The wreath worn by the victor in the games and not the diadem of the monarch.

*so stand fast in the Lord.* This looks back to i. 27. See note on that verse.

2. *I exhort Euodia, and I exhort Syntyche.* These were two women

who played a prominent part in Church life in Philippi. (See Int. p. xx for the position of women in Macedonia.) The presence of "exhort" before each name emphasises the Apostle's personal appeal to them. The jealousies and ambitions of women were one of the main sources of dissension and weakness in the Church and to some extent explain St Paul's repeated exhortations to unity in the Epistle. Ramsay (*Expositor*, vi. x. p. 45) is of opinion that one of the women was identical with Lydia, this being only her secondary name pointing to her native country and being equivalent to "the Lydian", and that the primary name was Euodia or Syntyche. The secondary name was frequently used in ordinary practice as the more familiar designation, just as the shorter name was often used for the longer as in the case of Silas for Silvanus, Apollos for Apollonius, and Prisca for Priscilla. Whether Lydia is indicated here or not it is more than probable that the women belonged to the original circle of disciples at Philippi, were closely connected with Lydia, and had been important factors in the development of the life of the Church since its foundation.

*to be of the same mind in the Lord.* The very atmosphere and spirit of Christianity and their own union with the Lord ought to have placed them above all jealousy and ambition in the past, and in the future these influences ought to pave the way to mutual peace and unity.

3. *true yokefellow.* The Greek *σύζυγος* might possibly be a proper

name, Syzyges, but no such name has as yet been discovered among the abundant literary remains of the age. If it is a proper name the Apostle plays upon its meaning as he does with that of Onesimus in Philemon 10, "a true yokefellow, as your name implies". It is more probably, however, just an ordinary noun referring to some well-known person either at Philippi or among the Apostle's own companions. Many suggestions have been offered as to the identity of this person, some of them interesting and some of them grotesque, as e.g. the suggestion that the reference is to Lydia who was married to St Paul! A plausible solution is that "the true yokefellow" was either Epaphroditus who was to be the bearer of the letter, or Timothy who was actually writing the letter and was to visit Philippi shortly. The description of the latter in ii. 20 as one "who will truly (the same word as *true* yokefellow) care for your state" supports the suggestion that he may be the person in question here. If so the appeal was an aside on the part of the Apostle, "and do you, my good comrade, when you get to Philippi help to bring about peace between these two women", which became incorporated in the letter. (Cf. Edmundson, *Bampton Lectures*, 1913, p. 111.)

If not a companion of St Paul he was probably some prominent member of the Philippian Church the reference to whom would be easily recognised by the readers of the Epistle but of whom we have no knowledge. He might have been one of the "bishops" mentioned in i. 1.

*help* = "lend a hand" in reconciling these women, or perhaps "help"

them in the work they are doing for the Gospel.

*for they laboured with me.* The Greek involves the idea of conflict and struggle and is, therefore, a fitting description of those who had been members of the Church from its foundation and had shared in the Apostle's work and sufferings. Cf. Moffatt's translation, "they fought at my side in the active service of the Gospel".

*with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow-workers.* This sentence is to be connected with "laboured with me" and not with "help". Clement is a name found in a Philippian inscription of the period. Cf. Int. p. xiv.

*the book of life.* This is an expression of long standing and is found as early as Exodus xxxii. 32. It is also used frequently in the Psalms. Cf. especially Psalm lxxix. 28, "Let them be blotted out of the book of the living". In Mal. iii. 16 the prophet speaks of a "book of remembrance" which was "written before God for them that found the Lord and that thought upon his name". In Dan. vii. 10 we read of the "books" being opened and again in xii. 1 of "every one that shall be found written in the book", and a similar distinction between "the book" and "the books" is found in Rev. xx. 12. The "books" were apparently a record of the deeds of all who were judged whereas the "book of life" only included those who were destined to eternal salvation. Cf. Rev. xiii. 8, "every one whose name hath not been written in the book of life of the Lamb". The figure was probably borrowed originally from civil lists or registers in which the names of the citizens were inscribed. Cf. iii. 20. An

interesting survival of the term is mentioned in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol. XIII. p. 580 f. "The Book of Life was a form of diptych in the Syriac liturgy of St James which was read in connection with the kiss of peace. A copy of this 'Liber Vitae' exists in the Vatican Library. It is described by George, Bishop of the Arab

Tribes in his 'Exposition of the Offices of the Church' in the following terms: 'The Book of Life which is laid upon the altar before the consecration of the mysteries shows the commemoration of the saints and their fellowship with Christ and that their names have been written in the book of life which is in heaven'".

(b) *A general exhortation to a spirit of joyfulness, patience, considerateness, and trust in God, closing with a benediction, 4—7*

4 <sup>1</sup>Rejoice in the Lord alway: again I will say, <sup>1</sup>Rejoice.  
5 Let your <sup>2</sup>forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord  
6 is at hand. In nothing be anxious; but in everything by  
prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests  
7 be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which  
passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and  
your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

<sup>1</sup> Or, Farewell

<sup>2</sup> Or, gentleness

*Now the sum and substance of all that I have written to you is included in one pregnant phrase, "Rejoice in the Lord", a precept that I can never too often repeat. Let all the world see your considerateness and realise that you are not unduly insistent upon your just rights, for the day of the Lord is at hand when all injustice and inequality shall be redressed. Do not let consuming care make your lives a burden to you but in all your affairs have recourse to prayer. Live your lives as in the presence of God and both by prayer and thanksgiving make all your needs known to Him. And the peace of God which can achieve far more than any thought or device of yours shall guard your souls and keep them safe against all dangers, for in Christ you have an impregnable fortress.*

4. *Rejoice.* Souter maintains that the verb χαίρειν in the Imperative always denotes a "greeting" and that the sense here is, therefore, that of "farewell". The somewhat peculiar repetition of the injunction in this passage is quite intelligible if we take the word in the sense of "rejoice", but if it meant "farewell" it is

difficult to account for. Moreover the corresponding noun "joy" is one of the dominant notes of the Epistle: it is better, therefore, to accept the Revisers' translation. The thought would then be illustrated by Clem. Alex. *Paed.* I. xx. 3, 4, "the 'new people' are always happy, always in the full bloom of thought,



always at spring-time", and again in *Paed.* i. xxii. 2, "the Church is the one thing in the world that always rejoices".

5. *your forbearance.* Matthew Arnold described this quality as the "sweet reasonableness" which he found to be so marked a feature in the character of Jesus. It is also perhaps the most definite characteristic of the spirit which animates this Epistle as a whole. In Classical Greek the word signified equity as opposed to strict law, gentleness as opposed to contentiousness, and the best English equivalent for it is possibly "considerateness" or "large-heartedness". The word is employed by St Paul in 2 Cor. x. 1, where he speaks of the "meekness and gentleness of Christ", and there is in the use of the word in our context an unspoken appeal to the spirit of Christ who had not insisted on His own privileges. Cf. ii. 5-8. "Exhibit in your own lives that which was such a beautiful trait in the Master's character, and do not be too insistent upon what is perhaps your just due".

*The Lord is at hand.* Cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 22, where the original Aramaic form of the expression, "Maran-atha", is preserved. This had probably come to be a familiar form of salutation in the primitive Church, and it is significant that while the Apostle had to some extent modified the eschatological views he entertained in his earlier Epistles the old phraseology still survives. The expression is also connected in thought with what precedes, "the day of the Lord, the day of rejoicing is near at hand. He will adjust all your grievances". A rendering which gives quite a different turn to the expression is favoured by

some scholars who interpret "near" in a local sense and translate "The Lord is near to you, by your side". Cf. Psalm cxlv. 18, "The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon Him". This rendering suits the context admirably and were it not for the fact that the use of the expression elsewhere in the New Testament and its peculiar ejaculatory form demand the eschatological connection one might say that the second is the preferable of the two translations.

6. *In nothing be anxious.* "Be care-ful for nothing" in the old sense of the word "care-ful". Considerateness towards others and a joyous, confident view of life should be the normal characteristics of the Christian. Cf. Sermon on the Mount, to which there may be a conscious reference.

*but in everything* = in all the details and trials of life, great and small.

*prayer and supplication with thanksgiving.* These are three invariable components of St Paul's own prayers as we saw in i. 3-11. Cf. also 1 Tim. ii. 1.

*prayer* is the atmosphere and spirit of prayer, the realising of God's presence.

*supplication* is the spirit of prayer in action.

*requests* are the actual favours which are asked of God in prayer.

*unto God* signifies the direction of the prayer as well as the need of the consciousness of God's presence and of His readiness to hear when we pray.

7. *the peace of God.* Cf. i. 2: iv. 9. This is the answer to the prayer, the peace which comes from God and calms all the inward tumults of the soul by removing all



traces of self-assertion and carking care.

*which passeth all understanding.*

This may mean either (1) "surpassing every thought", i.e. "achieving infinitely more than any care or thought of your own can accomplish", or (2) "surpassing your wildest dreams". The first is better because it brings into marked contrast what God's peace and man's thought can accomplish and, therefore, carries on the idea contained in the exhortation "in nothing be anxious". It also gives a more correct rendering of the Greek which represents the "faculty of thought" rather than the action of the faculty. Cf. Ephes. iii. 19.

*guard.* The original means "to garrison" and the figure is that of a garrison in a citadel keeping watch over a city. In all Hellenistic cities

this body had a twofold duty to perform, to keep peace within the city itself and to protect it against attacks from outside. So the peace of God guards the soul against the attacks of temptation from outside and keeps order among the discordant elements within the soul itself. There is an intentional contrast between the two words—peace and guard. Peace will be the truest sentry in the spiritual war.

*your hearts and your thoughts.*

The whole inner being of the Christian, his emotions, his affections, his will, and his thoughts are the objects of God's constant care and protection.

*in Christ Jesus.* "He is the citadel, a fortress of rest and holiness; the peace of God is the sentinel". (Moule.)

(c) *An appeal to the Philippians to study and value all that is beautiful and admirable in pagan morality, and to practise all that is estimable in his own Christian life, 8—9*

8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are <sup>1</sup>honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are <sup>2</sup>of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, <sup>3</sup>think on these things.

9 The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

<sup>1</sup> Gr. *reverend*.

<sup>2</sup> Or, *gracious*

<sup>3</sup> Gr. *take account of*.

*Finally, brethren, I would have you take into your calculation all that is best and noblest in the pagan life around you. Whatever is true, whatever is admirable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely and gracious, whatever of value there is in heathen virtue and whatever is worthy of praise in heathen life, these things you are to reckon with and*

*appraise. Be not content, however, with this pagan ideal but let the Christian teaching that I gave you and the Christian example that I set you be the ruling principles of your daily life and action. Then indeed shall the God of peace be with you.*

8. On St Paul's appreciation of what was beautiful and ethical in pagan life see Int. p. lxxi.

St Paul wishes the Philippian Christians not to imagine that all goodness lies within their own circle in such a sense as to lead them to ignore or despise or fail to admire the goodness that lies outside them, the heathen world and its civic life. To the Apostle goodness is goodness, truth is truth, and righteousness is righteousness wherever it is found, and if they would take account of it they would find it a further ground for faith in God and belief that all things are summed up in Christ.

*true.* (1) Truthfulness, the great Persian virtue (Herodot. I. 136), which will not pretend to what it does not really feel. Cf. Gen. xlii. 11, "We be true men".

(2) Truth of thought, i.e. a recognition of the facts of human life, not simply as they are but as they are in the sight of God, in their ideal: the laying hold of the principles that explain and unify them. This was the great object of Greek thought, and St Paul was probably thinking of the truths he had learnt from Stoicism which had been vitalised for him by his conversion.

*honourable.* In the A.V. "honest". Margin "venerable". In the R.V. "honourable". Margin "reverend". A better rendering than any of these perhaps would be "august", "majestic", "dignified". To the Philippians and to the Apostle himself the word would be primarily associated with the Greek gods and goddesses, especially with the *Σεμνὰι*

*Θεαί*, the witnesses to the reality of conscience and sin and its penalties. The word would also remind them of the temples of the gods, the heathen mysteries, and indeed of all heathen religions, which even at their lowest represent men's awe before the dreadful gods and at their best represent the belief that God is worthy to receive the best, the richest, the grandest gifts that we can offer Him.

It is also used of human character, and this is the case always in the New Testament where it is confined to the Pastoral Epistles. Cf. Titus ii. 2, 7 : 1 Tim. iii. 8. Here it would represent the "gravitas", the noble seriousness of the best Roman type.

*just*, i.e. right in the relation of man to man.

To St Paul and his converts the term would represent all that they connected with the Roman government, the whole fabric of law and of the law-courts, the magistrate as the minister of God to punish and to reward, as well as the commercial system of the Empire. The occurrence of the word here illustrates the Apostle's appreciation of what was the best and noblest characteristic of the Roman people and of its most valuable contribution to a later world, its splendid conception of law and its strong sense of justice, the value of which he himself had experienced more than once in his stormy career.

*pure*, in the sense of stainless and free from defilement. The reference may be first of all to the ceremonial purity among the Jews who met for

worship and prayer by the river, which was a witness to God's holiness. Then again ἀγνή was the special epithet of Artemis, the Virgin-Goddess, and was used in this connection to denote those whose lives were consecrated to religion. Further there would be associated with the word the thought of domestic purity which in the best Roman life reached a high standard, as we find from inscriptions and from Pliny's letters. Lastly perhaps it represented the real purity of thought essential in those approaching a temple. An inscription over a temple of Aesculapius reads :

"Pure must they be who pass this  
fragrant shrine within,  
And pure alone are they whose thoughts  
are free from sin".

*lovely, of good report.* The Greek words here are both ambiguous, but both give the tenderer side of life on its attractive side, in relation between man and man rather than in relation to God.

*lovely* is so translated in the A. and R.V.'s but it certainly includes the idea of "friendly" : all that there is of friendliness in the world. To St Paul the word would revive pleasant memories of the kindness and friendliness of the gaoler at Philippi and of the barbarians of Malta. It is the recognition of brotherhood and of the call to service where there is need, and the instinct of trust which is a child's attitude to anyone : it is all that we mean by courtesy, graciousness. If "lovely" is the right meaning the word opens out a wealth of imagination, the beauty of nature calling upward to the thought of God's beauty : the beauty of art in its effort to reproduce and surpass the beauty of nature : human beauty on

its deepest side, the beauty of a noble expression.

*of good report.* So translated in both the A. and R.V.'s and perhaps rightly. If so the phrase is akin to "if there be any praise" later on in the verse. But the word is more probably active in sense, i.e. "well speaking" rather than "well-spoken of", "gracious" as in the Margin of the R.V. and, therefore, closely associated with the previous word "lovely", although it points rather to words than to deeds. The word would recall to St Paul (1) The language of religious reverence, the awed silence in the heathen temples, the tribute of the *anima naturaliter Christiana* to the awful dread presence of God. (2) The language of "euphemism" ; the kindly desire to speak gently of the wrong doings of others, the utterance of the charity which covers all things. (3) Perhaps the beauty of poetry and music : the poet's desire to express things at their best, with its tribute to the spiritual aspect of things ; the musician's effort to express the manifold feelings stirred by the deepest thoughts.

*if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise.* These are comprehensive phrases but too general to dwell upon in detail.

*if there be any virtue,* "wherever you see any of the four great cardinal virtues of Plato or any of the virtues of Aristotle's Ethics", or more widely, "whatever excellence there is, there is a tribute to man's striving after perfection and to the spirit's control of the body".

*if there be any praise.* Whether it be the magistrates' praise of well doing or the state's decree in recognition of civic merit or even the praise awarded to the victor in the



games, there is a tribute to man's glad recognition of excellence and to his delight in it, to the value of human judgment.

*think on these things*, "think these thoughts, draw them into your mind as a preparation for action" or "think about these things, reckon with them, take account of them in your doctrine". Either exegesis implies a filling and a purifying of the mind. The value of thinking consists in the fact that it enlarges the sense of the working of God's spirit in the world and gives a deeper sense of the naturalness of religion. In St Paul's mind this should lead up to corresponding action, for he passes at once to a definite command: "the things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, *these things do*".

The whole paragraph is a noble illustration of St Paul's sensitiveness to the higher aspirations of those whom he strove to win for the faith which to him represented an immeasurably higher standard of life. There is not in the whole literature of Greece a more sympathetic picture of pagan ideals than those which St Paul sets before the Philippian Christians. It is the Hellenist that is speaking here, the man who had learnt amidst the surroundings of his early life and education to admire Greek culture and all that was beautiful in Greek life. And yet all through we recognise the restraint which he exercised in view of the Hebraist and the Christian in him. He had known too well the dark side of pagan life to be absolutely whole-hearted in his admiration of it.

9. It is not easy to decide whether the Apostle has still in mind the qualities he commends in the previous verse when he speaks of "the things

which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me" or whether he has now passed on to consider specific Christian virtues. The contrast between "these things do" and "think on these things" of v. 8 seems to point to a different category of virtues here. The pagan qualities are to be taken into account, weighed and valued, and then, if proved worthy, are to become factors in their daily lives, but the definite Christian graces, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, or even these same pagan qualities passed through the crucible of Christ as they saw them exemplified in the Apostle himself, required no weighing in the balance: their value was self-evident, and it only remained to put them into action.

*which ye both learned...and saw in me*. We note here the boldness of the Apostle's appeal to his own example, cf. iii. 17, 1 Cor. xi. 1, "Be ye imitators of me even as I am of Christ". We might have expected him to appeal directly to the example of Christ and yet his appeal is justified by two thoughts. (1) We have to be believed in by others (cf. 1 Tim. iv. 12), because those whom we strive to influence have to begin with ourselves, though we pass them on to the source of all goodness in us. (2) We have to be ourselves: to come to God to find our real self, our best self. We learn at once our limitations and dependence but we learn also our strength and our gifts. Cf. Gal. ii. 20: 1 Cor. xv. 10.

*and the God of peace shall be with you*. In v. 7 he had spoken of the peace of God which was to calm all their anxieties and accomplish all that their own thinking and planning could not do. Here we have the reverse side of the picture. They



had their work to do, their Christian life to develop in every direction, but faithful effort on their part would secure for them the presence and the blessing of the God who brings peace.

# VIII. AN EXPRESSION OF THE APOSTLE'S GRATITUDE FOR THE PHILIPPIANS' GIFT TO HIMSELF, 10-20

(a) *A recognition of the unfailing goodwill of the Philippian Church, coupled with an assertion of his own independence of material conditions because of his complete dependence upon the power of Christ within him, 10-13*

10 But I <sup>1</sup>rejoice in the Lord greatly, that now at length ye have revived your thought for me; <sup>2</sup>wherein ye did indeed take thought, but ye lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in 12 whatsoever state I am, therein to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know also how to abound: in everything and in all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in 13 want. I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me.

<sup>1</sup> Gr. rejoiced.

<sup>2</sup> Or, seeing that

*And now before I close my letter I have one pleasing duty to perform. It filled my heart with joy to find your care for me blossoming into life again. Not indeed that there ever was a time when you ceased to care for me. It was not the caring but the opportunity for translating it into action that was lacking. But it was not my own personal need that made your gift so precious. For I have now learned the lesson of Christian independence and contentment. Whether the tide of prosperity is running low or whether it is at the flood is all one to me: among all the changes and chances of life, whether I am fed or hungry, whether I am rich or poor, I have penetrated the real secret of living. It consists in the fact that I have all power through Christ who dwells in me and makes me strong.*

10. *revived.* A word used of flowers blooming again in springtime. Cf. Eccles. xi. 22, "and suddenly He maketh His blessing to flourish".

*wherein* = (1) "with reference to the matter I have just mentioned", or (2), as in the Margin of the R.V., "seeing that", i.e. "I rejoiced because you at length had an opportunity of

showing your love for me in a practical fashion".

11. *Not that I speak in respect of want.* "My gratitude is not a beggar's thanks for charity". (Agar Beet.)

*want.* A word only used here and in St Mark xii. 44, "She of her *want* did cast in all that she had",

and apparently signifying extreme poverty.

*for I have learned.* St Paul's sense of independence of material conditions was not a natural endowment but a lesson that he had learnt with some effort and difficulty.

*in whatsoever state I am.* Better, "in my present state whatever that may entail". The reference is not a general one, but has in view the Apostle's position at that particular time.

*to be content.* The corresponding Greek noun *αὐτάρκεια* which denotes the sufficiency of one who is independent of external circumstances was used by the Stoics to describe the dominant disposition of the "wise" man. It is used in this sense by St Paul in 2 Cor. ix. 8, "having all sufficiency in everything". Cf. 1 Tim. vi. 6. On the difference between the Christian and Stoic self-sufficiency, cf. Findlay, *Christian Doctrine and Morals*: "The self-sufficiency of the Christian is relative: an independence of the world through dependence upon God. The Stoic self-sufficiency pretends to be absolute. One is the contentment of faith, the other of pride. Cato and Paul both stand erect and fearless before a persecuting world: one with a look of rigid and defiant scorn, the other with a face now lighted up with unutterable joy in God, now cast down with sorrow and wet with tears for God's enemies. The Christian martyr and the Stoic suicide are the final examples of these two memorable and contemporaneous protests against the evils of the world".

12. *I know.* This is the result of the lesson he had learnt.

*to be abased.* The Greek word is used of the dropping of a river after a flood or of the levelling of a height.

Cf. St Luke iii. 5, "Every mountain and hill shall be brought low". The meaning attached to the word by St Paul is illustrated by 2 Cor. xi. 7, "Did I commit a sin in *abasing myself* that ye might be exalted because I preached to you the Gospel of God for nought?" where it has the sense of "keeping myself low", perhaps with reference to his working as a tent-maker but more probably pointing to the comparative poverty which was the result of his self-denying action. So it comes to denote any form of adversity, a going down into reproach, poverty, or sorrow. There is in the use of the word here an echo of the humiliation of the Master which the Apostle has described so poignantly in ii. 6.

*to abound.* Lit. "to overflow"; the very antithesis of the thought expressed in "to be abased".

*in everything and in all things.* This phrase involves two ideas, every individual circumstance of life, and life as a whole.

*have I learned the secret.* The original, from which our English word "mystery" is derived, denotes the act of initiation into the secrets and privileges of the "Mystery Religions" of Greece and the East and furnishes another instance of the Apostle's habit of using terms derived from pagan life and religion which were familiar to his readers in order to illustrate his own ideas. From its use in connection with the "Mysteries" the term came to have the sense of "to become familiar with" which is the meaning here. "I have been initiated into, have become familiar with, the secret". The past participle came eventually to be used to denote a baptized Christian, i.e. one who had been initiated into the Christian Mysteries.

*to be filled.* This word originally denoted the feeding of animals with grass from which it came to have the meaning of "to be filled to repletion". Cf. St Matt. v. 6.

13. *I can do all things.* The Greek requires a stronger expression, "I have all power". The verse as a whole is an expansion of the preceding and explains the secret into which he has been initiated. He has learned not only how to be filled and to be hungry, how to overflow and be in want, but he has realised also that he is absolute master of all cir-

cumstances in the power with which Christ has endowed him. To him there belongs now the fullest and completest self-sufficiency which is compatible with his utter dependence upon Christ. It is related that when Cromwell was dying he asked that vv. 11-13 of this chapter should be read to him and that after this was done he repeated the passage to himself so that the last words heard from his lips were, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me".

(b) *The assertion of his own self-sufficiency in Christ is now coupled with a grateful acknowledgment of the Philippians' kind thought for himself on this as well as on previous occasions, for which kindness God will repay them, 14-19*

14 Howbeit ye did well, that ye had fellowship with my  
15 affliction. And ye yourselves also know, ye Philippians,  
that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from  
Macedonia, no church had fellowship with me in the matter  
16 of giving and receiving, but ye only; for even in Thessa-  
17 lonica ye sent once and again unto my need. Not that I  
seek for the gift; but I seek for the fruit that increaseth  
18 to your account. But I have all things, and abound: I am  
filled, having received from Epaphroditus the things *that*  
*came* from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice  
19 acceptable, well-pleasing to God. And my God shall fulfil  
every need of yours according to his riches in glory in  
Christ Jesus.

*And yet it was a noble deed of yours to sympathise with me in my affliction and to contribute towards my needs. And you are well aware, my dear Philippian friends, that this kind act of yours was no new thing on your part, for you will remember how in those far off days when I first preached the Gospel among you that it was you alone that participated with me in the matter of giving and taking. And there were other occasions also when you did this, for in a city of the rank*



and riches of Thessalonica you more than once ministered to my needs. Not, as I have already reminded you, that I am in any pressing need of your gift, but I value it because of the interest that will accrue to you from it. I give you a receipt in full. I am indeed filled to overflowing by your care for and kindness to me. And your gift that came by the hand of Epaphroditus meant much more than an offering to me. It was in truth a sacrifice and offering well pleasing and acceptable to God. I have nothing to give you in return but my thanks, but my God will amply repay you and supply all your wants out of the treasures of His riches in the glorious Kingdom of Christ.

14. *ye did well.* Better "ye did a noble and beautiful thing".

*that ye had fellowship with my affliction.* By their practical sympathy with him they had become sharers in his imprisonment and sufferings and had taken something of his burden upon themselves... So it had been his own aim "to know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings": to be so intimately united with Christ that His sufferings and death became his own. The union of the Christian with Christ produces a similar fellowship of Christian with Christian. Cf. iii. 10.

15. *ye Philippians*, the name by which Roman citizens resident in the colony described themselves as compared with the natives of the city. Here and there the Apostle is in the habit of addressing his readers directly by a general term that embraces them all and sums them up in one class. Cf. 2 Cor. vi. 11: Gal. iii. 1. It is always a mark of deep emotion when he is impelled to make this direct appeal so that every reader may feel that he is personally addressed. In all three cases where this direct appeal occurs it follows an autobiographical passage in which the Apostle puts prominently forward his own work and the spirit in which that work is done. (See Ramsay, *Expositor*, v. viii. p. 121.)

*in the beginning of the gospel =*

"when the Gospel was first preached to you". This is one of those expressions which illustrate the very considerable importance which the Apostle attached to the Macedonian mission as the first definite step towards the bringing of the Gospel to Rome, the centre of the Empire, and, therefore, towards the evangelising of the world. In 2 Thess. ii. 13, according to a reading which is well supported, he speaks of the Church of Thessalonica as "the first fruit of the gospel", and his language here in describing the mission in that region emphasises the same view.

*when I departed from Macedonia.* Combining this statement with that in the following verse "for even in Macedonia ye sent once and again to my need" we gather that the Philippians had during the early period of their association with St Paul contributed at least three times to his wants, twice in Thessalonica itself and once after he had left that city. The last occasion is probably identical with that mentioned in 2 Cor. xi. 9, "the brethren when they came from Macedonia supplied the measure of my want".

*in the matter of giving and receiving.* Lit. "in the matter of debit and credit". H. A. A. Kennedy in an interesting note on "The Financial colouring of Phil. iv. 15-18" in the *Expository Times*, xii. 43, writes,



"It is possible that the Philippians may have been conscious of some slight remissness in their attention to St Paul and perhaps the Apostle sets himself to correct a temporary misunderstanding on their part as to his feelings towards them. So when he comes to thank them he does so with singular grace and happiness of touch, and by a skilful and unstrained use of financial terms he imparts a half-humorous tone to this section of the Epistle. Thus in v. 15 the terms 'debit and credit' represent *the squaring of the account* by their gifts to him. The preposition 'unto' in 'unto my need' in v. 16 is used in a semi-technical sense as in the *papyri* of 'the application of the several items in an account'. Here it means 'to account of my need'. So again 'the fruit that increases to your account' is translated by Chrysostom, 'the fruit shall produce interest for you', and he evidently understood St Paul's words as having a flavour of the exchange". See also note on v. 18.

17. See Kennedy's note under v. 15. Cf. also Moffatt's translation, "It is not the money that I am anxious for; what I am anxious for is the interest that accumulates in this way to your divine credit".

18. *But I have all things.* ἀπέχω which is here translated "I have" is the invariable term for giving a receipt in the vernacular of the period and is generally found in this sense in *papyri* and *ostraka*. We should, therefore, paraphrase, "I give you a receipt in full for all you owe me".

*an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.* St Paul lifts the contribution of the Philippians from the mere level of mutual courtesy and sympathy and

looks upon it in its relation to God. He imparts to it a sacrificial aspect, regarding it as a holy and fragrant offering to God Himself. Similar language is used in the Epistle of Clement (chap. xlv.) and in the Didachè (chap. xiv.), not only with respect to the elements in the Eucharist, but also in regard to the material offerings of the congregation at that service.

*an odour of a sweet smell.* This is a reminiscence of Exod. xxix. 18 and Ezek. xx. 41.

19. *my God.* God was his, and, therefore, all the treasury of God's love and grace was at his disposal. The consciousness of his possession by God and of God by him fills him with such confidence that he makes the most lavish of promises, for he regards the very riches of heaven as his in Christ.

*shall fulfil every need of yours.* "You have ministered to me. What can I send you in return? I have no gift that Epaphroditus can carry, but my God will cover every need of yours with the wealth of His riches".

*according to his riches.* The measure of God's generosity is in proportion to His illimitable riches, which are a treasury as deep as Divine love itself. Cf. 1 Cor. iii. 22, "all things are yours", and 1 Tim. vi. 17.

*in glory.* This may mean either (1) the sphere in which the infinite graciousness of God is manifested. The reference would then be to the glory of the Messianic Kingdom. Cf. Ephes. i. 18, "the riches of the glory of his inheritance", or (2) the result of the outpouring of God's riches would be to manifest His glory. In view of the frequent occurrence of the thought of Christ's Kingdom in glory in the Epistle it

is probable that the Apostle has that idea in mind here.

*in Christ Jesus.* The treasures of God are revealed and bestowed in

Christ Jesus and they will be realised in their full content in His Kingdom of glory.

20 Now unto our God and Father *be* the glory <sup>1</sup>for ever and ever. Amen.

<sup>1</sup> Gr. *unto the ages of the ages.*

20. Doxology. "*Now unto our God and Father be the glory for ever and ever. Amen*". The Pauline doxology is found in one form or another in Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, and 1 Timothy. The particular form it takes here is practically a repetition of Gal. i. 5, where the doxology is at its simplest. In Rom. xvi. 27, Ephes. iii. 20, 21, and 1 Tim. i. 17 it is much elaborated and expanded and shows signs of the influence of Jewish doxologies such as are found in Tobit xiii. 6, 10 and Enoch ix. 4. Here it is an ascription of praise to the Father for His infinite grace and love towards mankind manifested by the rich inheritance which awaits His saints in the glorious Kingdom of Christ.

*the glory.* The presence of the

article is important. It is "*the* glory" which is God's own attribute and element.

*Amen.* This is a transliteration of a Hebrew word which is both an adverb and a noun and means firm(ly), valid(ly) and is used to express assent to a preceding statement. In the post-exilic age it came to be employed as an answer or refrain in chorus to the words of a previous speaker and is found in this connection at the close of each division of the Psalter. It acquired a fixed place in the services of the synagogue where it still forms the common response of the congregation. From the synagogue it was borrowed by the Christian Church. Cf. 1 Cor. xiv. 16; Rev. v. 14.

## IX. FINAL SALUTATIONS AND BENEDICTION, 21—23

21 Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which  
22 are with me salute you. All the saints salute you, especially they that are of Cæsar's household.

23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

*Greet in the name of Christ every Christian among you. My own personal companions send greetings and so do all the Christians here, especially those who are attached to the Imperial household.*

*May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.*

21. Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. "In Christ Jesus" should be taken with "salute" and not with "saint". See note on i. 14. Cf. the

translation in *The New Testament in Modern Speech*, "My Christian greetings to every one of God's people".

*The brethren which are with me salute you.* The salutation here is from the Apostle's more immediate circle.

22. *All the saints salute you,* i.e. Roman Christians as a whole.

*especially they that are of Caesar's household.* These are slaves and freedmen belonging to the Imperial establishment. Cf. Int. p. lv.

In Rom. xvi. 10, 11 St Paul sends greetings to the households of Aristobulus and Narcissus, both of which are known from contemporary records to have passed into the possession of the Emperor at their owners' deaths. "Nero's palace was a strange place for saints, but light penetrates into the darkest places. Some of those who had to wait every day in the presence of Nero were all the time beholding the face of Christ. Paul was not a prisoner in vain". (Strachan, s.v.)

23. The Apostolic benediction. The normal method of closing a letter at this period was by the use of the single word "farewell" as is shown by countless *papyrus* letters as well as by letters included in the New Testament itself. Cf. Acts xv. 29 and possibly Acts xxiii. 30. St Paul, however, sets up a closing formula of his own and as he tells us in 2 Thess. iii. 17, 18 he does so deliberately: "The salutation with mine own hand, the hand of Paul, which is the token in every epistle, so I write. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all". His signature was also different from that employed by other Apostolic writers, for St Peter and St John both invoke "peace" and not "grace" as their parting blessing. Cf. 1 St Peter v. 14: 3 St John 14.

The Apostle's closing greeting is found in its simplest form in Col. iv. 18,

"Grace be with you" and reaches its highest development in the Trinitarian formula in 2 Cor. xiii. 14, but in every form, simple or elaborate, "grace" is the essential constituent and in every instance except in Col. iv. 18 it is "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" that is accentuated. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you", is the core of the Apostle's message. It is through the grace given by Christ and through the right use of it that man learns something of the love which God has for man, as it is through the grace of Christ that the love of God manifests itself and is reflected in the love which man has for his fellows. Even in the full Trinitarian benediction "grace" comes first, and here St Paul is following the line of his own experience. It was the "grace" of our Lord Jesus Christ that revealed to him the love of the Father in all its infinite richness, it is His grace that made it possible for him to become partaker of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit by which he became inseparably united to Christ and to whose Divine influence he was indebted for all that was of value in his life.

*be with your spirit.* This ending is peculiar to this Epistle and that to the Galatians. Its occurrence here is perhaps due to the Apostle's anxiety to close the letter on the note that he has sounded so clearly and so persistently throughout. He is possibly looking back to i. 27, "that ye stand fast in one spirit", and so his closing prayer and blessing are an invocation of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ upon his beloved Philippians that through it they may be completely filled with the Holy Spirit, that Spirit which produces unity and peace in the Church of God.

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